

*The*  
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# AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER



RECORDS

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EDITED BY PETER HUGH REED



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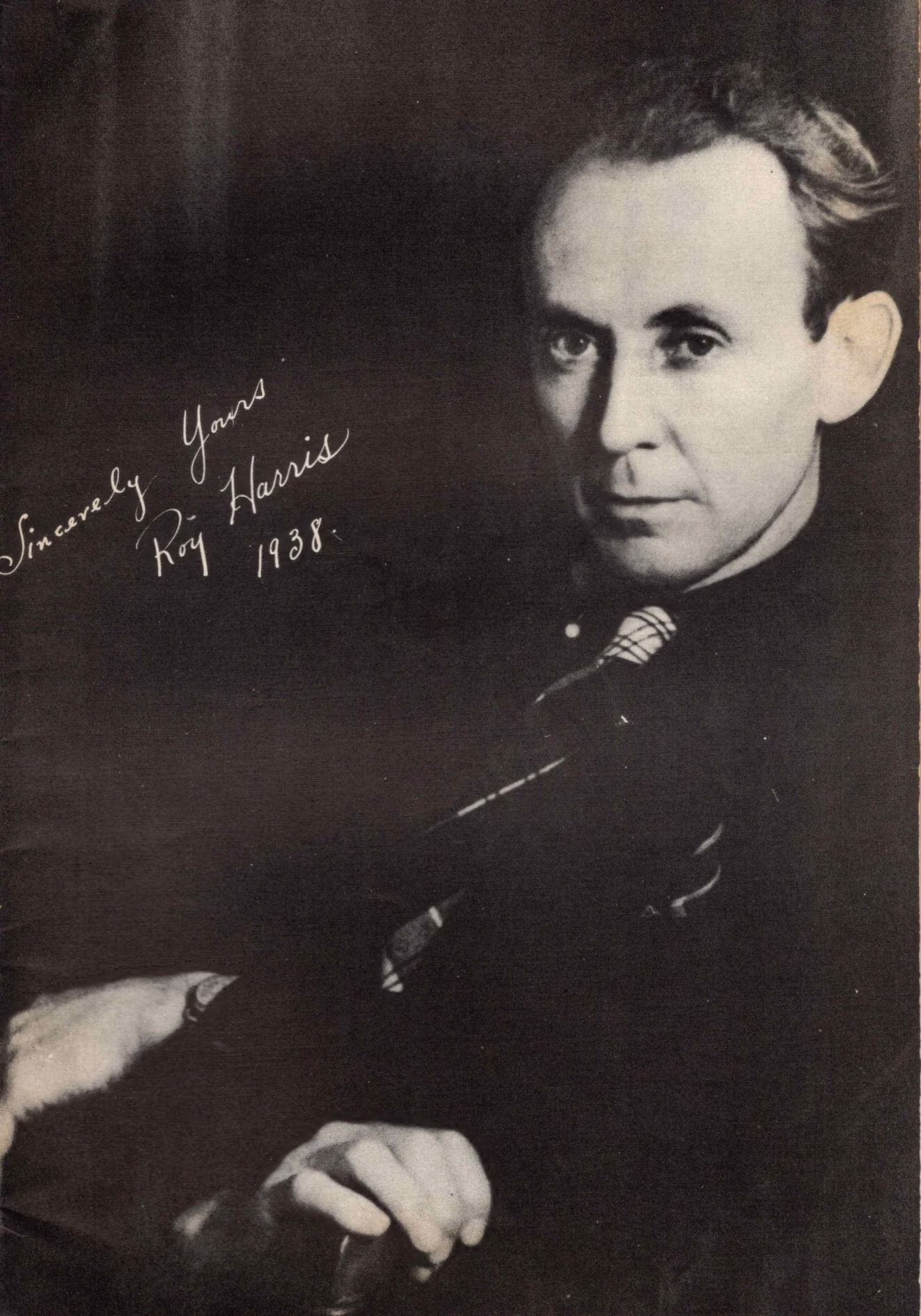
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Sincerely Yours  
Roy Harris  
1938.









# The American Music Lover

A Monthly Review of Phonograph Records, Radio and Music

March  
1938

Volume III, No. 11

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Insert: Prominent Musical Personalities—Past and Present  
No. 1 — ROY HARRIS

## Editorial Notes

THE difficulty of maintaining a set date for the release of The American Music Lover is occasioned by the fact that the recognized heart of the magazine, the Record Notes and Reviews, are not infrequently held up by the lateness of the arrival of the review material. Last month one of the companies did not get their review discs to us before the 25th. As it is not always possible for a reviewer to turn his attentions immediately to his review material, we cannot expect to have the written reviews back in less than two or three days. Adding the time necessary for setting these into print, editing, etc., and then for making-up and printing the magazine, the best we can do is to publish under ten days.

This month we have been similarly retarded in our publishing date, which is scheduled between the first and the third, by the fact that another company was unable to get their review copies to us before the 26th of the month.

It is entirely in the interest of our readers that the publication date is pushed forward to cope with such emergencies as those mentioned.

\* \* \* \*

With this issue, The American Music Lover presents the first of a series of pictures of Prominent Musical Personalities—Past and Present, as an insert in the magazine designed to be cut out and framed at the wish of the reader. We believe our readers will welcome this innovation, and would be glad to know how many would like some of the previous portraits we have run from time to time made up in a similar manner.

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# Roy Harris—American Composer

THE origin of one's forebears influences one's destiny as strongly as does environment; for the two are indubitably linked in the final analysis. Roy Harris tells us that he traces his energy, his strength, and his purpose to the rugged pioneer spirit of his Scotch-Irish ancestry. "There were five generations of the family in this country before my advent," he says, "all of them of solid pioneer stock."

Roy Harris can trace even more than that to his ancestry: his extraordinary gifts for leadership, his enthusiasm for his chosen profession, and his forceful and arresting personality. The latter has caused him to be unjustly criticized as being a shrewd purveyor of his wares. This, however, is not a matter of salesmanship — Harris believes firmly in himself, in his music, and in his particular philosophy of life. And he has the ability to influence others and to sustain their confidence. Few composers have been as fortunate as he has in having their latest works performed almost immediately after completion, and in receiving wide exploitation of the events. Among other attributes, Harris has the courage of his convictions and also of his enthusiasms, and it is to these admirable traits that we can accredit his ability to "put himself across" with people.

In a log cabin, on a farm staked out of the Cimarron homestead rush in Lincoln County, Oklahoma, appropriately enough on Lincoln's birthday, Roy Harris was born just before the turn of the present century. Here he spent the first five years of his life. And here that love of Nature, which is imbedded so deeply in him and from which he has drawn the inspirational motivation of his work, was first instilled. In his sixth year, Harris' parents moved to the beautiful San Gabriel Valley in Southern California, where they took up their abode on a ranch that came out of the Lucky Baldwin Estate. Here the rhythm of Nature, the varied manifestations of the changing seasons, gradually impressed the boy more and more as he grew and through his love of these aspects of natural life his pantheistic credo was evolved.

"The barbarism or ruggedness of my progenitors undoubtedly placed asymmetry in my blood," he says, "but the Sierra Madre Mountains, the fertile San Gabriel Valley, with its constant evolution of eternal life, its

regeneration from within itself, had its definite effect on the development of my acceptance and belief in life. Here, for twenty years, I saw the sun rise and set in the same spot, and its reiteration of a purpose developed a pantheistic worship in the very roots of my being."

Roy Harris' love of music, inherited from his ancestors, came to him more directly from his maternal grandmother. She was, he tells us, a fine organist. Until his twenty-fifth year, however, he had almost no musical education. When he first decided upon music as a career, he met with great opposition from his father. A sturdy earth-loving farmer, Harris' parent held the idea — not uncommon in those days — that a musical career could not be dissociated from tea parties and other distasteful social functions.

Harris first studied music with Arthur Farwell in California. During the two years that he was under Farwell's instruction, learning the fundamentals of his art, he worked in the daytime as a truck driver and pursued his musical studies at night. From Modeste Altschuler Harris received his first lesson in orchestration. Three years after his first studies with Farwell, Harris hitchhiked across the country to hear his first orchestral work, an *Andante* for full orchestra, performed by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra at the Lewisohn Stadium in New York City. This composition won for him a Guggenheim fellowship, which permitted him to go to Europe and study under Nadia Boulanger in Paris. After four years in the French capital, Harris returned to this country, where he soon established himself as one of the most outstanding contemporary American composers and a brilliant teacher. Today, he is a leading spirit in the Westminster Choir School at Princeton, where among his other activities, he has inaugurated Spring Festivals of American music. For, besides his teaching and composing activities, Harris spends much time in stimulating interest in American works and creating opportunities for the music of his fellow composers to be heard.

Roy Harris is a modernist in every sense of the word, but he is not a radical nor is he an innovator in the manner of a Schönberg or a Debussy. He believes that a new harmonic vocabulary and an orchestral technique have been definitely established and de-



By PETER HUGH REED

veloped in modern times, and that further experimentation along these lines does not have to be done before we can produce another period of music which is homogeneous in style. He is deeply interested in medieval music as well as the music of the classic era. The Romantic School of the 19th century, in his estimation, was an inferior era adding only brilliant showmanship to the progress of music; a brilliance, he believes, that no modern composer can afford to overlook. Although medieval music has influenced him, his own music belongs definitely to the 20th century and by virtue of this fact cannot be considered anything but modern. Five years ago, Arthur Farwell said that Harris "is coming to be regarded as a symbol of the most advanced modern musical thought". Today, Mr. Farwell would undoubtedly amend that statement, and say — Harris is to be regarded, etc." for Farwell's prediction, in our estimation, has been fully realized in Harris' work since then.

"Musical appreciation begins with me," he says, "with Gregorian Chant, because of the asymmetry of the design, which is closely related to the asymmetry of Nature. The design, one might say, grows out of itself; it is not symmetrical in the way that man-made things are, on the other hand it is not disproportionate, but its proportions are regulated by its growth from within in adjustment to its environments. Symmetrical patterns have their definite limitations. Symmetry, for example, belongs to industrialism. Now, I do not wish to decry industrialism because I think man will use industrial organization to liberate himself from the drudgery of long hours, so that he will have more time for a broader understanding of human values and universal laws through culture and education. The latter is most important, because if man does not fill in that time that he gains, civilization will surely go to pieces.

"The democratic ideal has not yet had a chance to prove itself in this country, but I thoroughly believe that the firmest and finest thought grew out of the Jeffersonian democratic ideal; wherein man should have the free sense of responsibility to his community and his nation which comes from owning property of his own. And this surely would engender that broader understanding of



ROY HARRIS AND A GROUP OF HIS PUPILS

values and laws through culture and education.

"I feel that all composers should study all resources of their art in separate categories — such as melody, harmony, counterpoint, and form, and also instrumentation. By this I mean a study of musical materials as they evolved through usage. I believe firmly in the birth of a new classicism. In modern times I feel we are again returning to the asymmetrical resources of a freer melody. The wide interest in Bach today would tend to prove this. But those who make a study of Bach, and Bach alone, are making a mistake, for prior to Bach's time there were other composers who influenced him and whose greatness is not overshadowed by the renowned Johann Sebastian. Palestrina, Orlando di Lasso, Vittoria, Josquin de Prés, and Dunstable, the Englishman, whom I consider a very important composer, are musical figures definitely to be reckoned with."

Harris' music, like the later music of Sibelius, grows out of itself, and its harmony is a direct result of its contrapuntal expansion. It is not formal in the accepted sense of the word, and yet as Harris himself has said of Nature, it is not disproportionate, but proportioned by its own inner growth. The academic idea of formal development is not sympathetic to him, the form of his music is autogenous, that is, it generates from within itself, which is, he explains, exactly what Nature does.

"My musical aims are epic and lyric," he states. "The thing I am heading for is classicism brought up to date, in which no one element is emphasized to the detriment of an-



other. I do not believe that melody and harmonic texture should be sacrificed to architectural design as Schönberg has done, or that architectural design should be reduced to a sequence of blocked out episodes into which is poured fabulous orchestral color and melody smothered under super-imposed rhythms as Stravinsky has done."

Harris lays more stress on the importance of the melodic line than on harmony. His emancipation, as he terms it, from chordal writing came as the result of a spinal injury he had in Paris.

"Those long months of recovery in New York which followed my spinal fracture in Paris," he says, "when I lay flat on my back, freed me of the tyranny of the piano. It is strange how an accident like that can turn out to be one of the most influencing things in one's life. Composing apart from the piano, I found myself emphasizing melodic line rather than harmony. And, of course, during that period I was able to make long and extensive studies of the music of the great men of the past."

Harris' melodic lines are long ones; he does not like to express himself in short sentences. "A melody should definitely go some place," he tells us. As regards harmony, dissonance, for dissonance's sake, he contends, is absurd; but dissonance that grows naturally out of development is right and definitely of value. Harris' rhythms have been termed intricate and uneven, but this opinion is perhaps based on the fact that elegance and grace are not motivating impulses with him. The element of time enters into his creation of music very definitely. He feels that the modern composer should be able to write whatever he wants to write within a given time, and he has proved the soundness of his views in several instances in his own music—more recently in his *Time Suite*, composed as the result of a radio commission, and also in his admirable *Poem*, for violin and piano, and his *Four Minutes and Twenty Seconds*, for flute and strings.

"The element of time, in my estimation," he states, "does not limit the intensity of a musical mood as many would like us to believe, because time is very closely related to space and music is preeminently a time-space language. It is a language of time because its continuity is actually in terms of time sequence. That is, music exists only in the immediate now. It exists in space in its very embodiment, that is, it is actually a constant variation of expansion and contraction of sound volumes through which are passed

harmonic textures and rhythmic designs presenting various tonal mediums."

Harris believes that a great deal of the best music in existence was written to order. A composer, he claims, should ply his trade as assiduously and as faithfully as any other worker. In the matter of musical commissions he feels that the radio and recording companies should play a major part. They can be, he says, the most outstanding patrons of the art of music of all time, for their influence is almost limitless. In his own words — "in this business of commissioning music, music of all sorts, radio will undoubtedly play a major role, for radio feeds on music, and certainly it cannot chew the existent musical cud forever and remain a progressive influence with the majority of the people."

Since music, to those who like it, means many things, its power, Harris feels, is not to be outlined in words. "With me," he says, "music more than anything else establishes the divinity of man."

\* \* \*

Roy Harris is one of the most original and forceful musical figures in present-day America. The pioneer spirit that made America is in him, in his art, and in his outlook. Great energy and muscular strength are his by right of birth, and these he imparts to his music. The quality of nervous vitality, which is noticeable in all his music, is a direct result of environment, and a reflection of the restless times in which the composer lives. Despite his French schooling, under Boulanger, Harris is an American in thought and expression; one looks in vain for national influences apart from those of his own land.

Mr. Harris' formal design might be truly termed rigorous, for it demands much of the listener. He relies considerably on subtleties of counterpoint and imitation which are not always clear. His autogenous style of writing has its definite assets, one of which is its expressive individuality, but it also has its defects. For in nearly all of his bigger works, his solid contrapuntal development often attains a thickness of texture that is overwhelming, and his craftsmanship frequently exceeds his inspiration. Particularly is this true in his latest chamber work, the *Quintet* for piano and strings, one of the most forceful and striking scores that the composer has written to date. For here the music not only exceeds its bounds upon occasion, but also strains at the limitation of its instrumentation. Although Mr. Harris does not agree with us, we believe its proportions would be more advantageously set forth were the work to be scored for



piano and orchestra, if only for string orchestra.

It is in his deeply searching, immanently dark-hued and earnestly felt slow movements that the fullness of Harris' genius is revealed. The salient parts of his *Three Variations on a Theme*, of his *Symphony* 1933, and of his *Trio* are, in our estimation, slow movements. In them we encounter, as in his *Chorale* for strings, a true manifestation of the pioneer's belief in a benevolent law of compensation, which Mr. Harris definitely feels was inherited from his forebears. In their intensified, introspective emotional qualities, Harris' slow movements sound an epical note; one not usually associated or met with in modern music. Harris contends in them he is trying to achieve a melos without incorporating the medieval appliance of ecclesiasticism.

Roy Harris is represented by more recordings than is any other American composer. Credit should be given Mr. Harris for this, for he has seen to it that the recording companies were specifically informed of the merits of various compositions. He has also inspired the companies to commission him to write special compositions for them, as in the case of his *Four Minutes and Twenty Seconds*, his overture *Johnny Comes Marching Home*, and his *Poem* for violin and piano. Whether or not the majority think the companies have been justified in representing him so liberally is not important. The important thing is, here is an American composer with enough initiative and ability to put himself across, and who has something specific to say whether we agree with him or not. Mr. Harris has also persuaded the companies to record works of his fellow American composers. That the interest of the companies has been justified in sales would seem to us a foregone conclusion.

Harris' recording debut began in 1933 with the issuance of his *Concerto, Opus 2*, for piano, clarinet and strings (Columbia set No. 281). It was written during his first year in Paris and performed at that time by the Roth String Quartet with Nadia Boulanger at the piano. Later the League of Composers presented its first American performance. The work owns a maturity of style which is striking when one considers it in relation to the composer's development. It is music original in purpose, convincingly expressed, in part deeply felt. The concerto is divided into two sections, each in two movements. The first movement is a fantasia in rondo form, freely treated. The intervals of a minor second and minor third, given out at the opening by the clarinet, play a most important part in the

main theme of this movement and the thematic material of the third movement. The scherzo which follows, the composer tells us, is written to emphasize the brilliance of the clarinet and piano. It is composed of long melodic lines and has a most interesting and unusual development section. The andante has a dramatic intensity and a poetic depth of feeling which is particularly expressive. The fourth movement, based on a fugato subject, builds with overpowering intensity and veritably strains its bounds. It is propulsive and sinewy music, powerful and gigantic, assuming orchestral proportions.

Harris' *Symphony* 1933 was his next work recorded. It was made at an actual performance of the work in Carnegie Hall, New York, on February 2, 1934. It was performed by the Boston Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Serge Koussevitzky, who previously gave the symphony its first performance in Boston. As a recording, this reproduction of the symphony (Columbia set No. 191) cannot be termed outstanding; it does not do full justice to the score, since recording conditions at that time did not allow for the clarity of line obtainable today in recording from actual performance. Despite this fact, however, the set offers a definitely rewarding experience.

The symphony, although uneven in its inspirational import, is nonetheless an interesting and imposing one with its vitality and resolution. An autogenous work, it grows from mere germs of themes, which widen and expand into long melodic lines, that veer and change in tonal expression, all of which is as logical as it is unpresageable. Conflicting rhythms, angular and forceful, are a feature of the score.

The composer tells us that he has endeavored to "capture the mood of adventure and physical exuberance" in his first movement; "of the pathos which seems to underlie all human existence" in his second movement; and "the mood of a positive will to power and action" in his last movement.

On the odd side of the symphony recording is one of Harris' most instantly arresting pieces, *Four Minutes and Twenty Seconds*, written especially for Columbia records. It is a quasi-pastoral for flute and string quartet.

Two of Roy Harris' most striking works, *A Song of Occupations* (Columbia set 226) and his *Symphony for Voices* (Victor set M-427), are indicative of the composer's American background, for they are truly American works in thought, in purpose and in spirit. Both are settings of texts by Walt



Whitman, for whom Harris has an especial regard.

A *Song of Occupations* might be termed an industrial composition, for it glorifies the worker. Harris matches the strength and rhythmic audacity of Whitman's verse with music that is vigorously assertive, strenuous and compelling. It is exciting music, with a splendid fervor in its opening and closing sections.

In his *Symphony for Voices* Harris again finds inspiration in Walt Whitman's poetry. His first and second movements utilize text from *Sea-drift*, and his last movement three lines only from *Inscriptions*.

In the first movement, called *Song for All Seas, All Ships*, the composer gives his melodic lines and their development to the soprano voices, while the male voices have a rocking accompaniment suggesting the restlessness of the sea. The insistence and repetition of high notes for the sopranos place quite a strain on the singers, but Harris' intentions are arresting, and the effect of the whole is emotionally cumulative and most effective. The second movement, called *Tears*, is a song of sorrow and despair. A contralto soloist is featured. A spoken background here, furnished by the bass voices, is reiterative and intensifying. This spoken background is an idea borrowed by the composer from the ancient Greek theatre; a further illustration of his mating of old ideas with modern ones. The last movement, the most original and striking of the three, is a triple fugue founded on the following lines:

Of life immense in passion, pulse,  
and power,  
Cheerful, for freest action form'd  
under the laws divine,  
The Modern Man I Sing.

Here assuredly is an imposing score; a score which sounds a universal note of tragedy, intricate and complicated in its structure, yet impelling in its dramatic impact.

Mr. O'Connell, in his notes for the last-named work, says: "Roy Harris might have entitled his work *The Modern Man I Sing*. Harris himself *does* sing the modern man, in *all* that he does. With reverence—not slavish worship—for the past, with acute

interest in the present and with an optimistic eye toward the future, Harris brings to his work a penetrating sympathy with the life of modern America." In Harris, America has a composer of whom it can be justly proud. His progress, we feel certain, will be watched with growing engrossment by all those interested in modern music.

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## HARRIS' WORKS ON RECORDS

*Concerto, Opus 2*; Aeolian Quartet with Gorodner and Cumpson. Columbia set 281.

*String Quartet—Variations on a Theme*; Roth quartet. Victor set M-244.

*Song for Occupations*; Westminster Choir. Columbia set No. X-50.

*Poem*; Albert Spalding and André Benoit. Victor disc 8997.

*Symphony 1933*; Boston Symphony Orchestra, with *Four Minutes and Twenty Seconds* (last side); Laurent and Burgin Quartet. Columbia set No. 191.

*Symphony for Voices*; Westminster Choir. Victor set M-427.

*Trio*; Poltronieri, Bonucci, Casella. Columbia set No. 282.

*When Johnny Comes Marching Home—Overture*; Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra. Victor disc 8629.

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## AFTER TOSCANINI

More famous conductors will follow Toscanini with the NBC-Symphony after his last broadcast on Saturday, March 5th. Carlos Chavez, noted composer and conductor of the Symphony Orchestra of Mexico City, Artur Rodzinski, Pierre Monteux, Sir Adrian Boult and Bernardino Molinari are those listed to come after Mr. Toscanini.

According to present plans Mr. Chavez will direct the broadcasts on March 12 and 19, Mr. Rodzinski will return for the programs of April 2, 9, and 16, Mr. Monteux will be in charge of the broadcasts of April 23 and 30, and Sir Adrian Boult is scheduled to conduct on May 14 and 21. Mr. Molinari is expected to follow Sir Adrian.





# DON GIOVANNI

## SOME REFLECTIONS AND A REVIEW

By NATHAN BRODER

THE current "revival" of *Don Giovanni* at the Metropolitan Opera House and the release this month of the Glyndebourne recording have re-awakened public interest in this masterpiece. It is rather startling to realize that today, 151 years after its performance, musical scholars are still quarreling about the form of this work, stage directors still disagreeing about its spirit. What is it — a comedy or a tragedy, or both? This is not an idle question, designed to find an appropriate pigeonhole. Upon the answer to this question depends the whole plan of a performance, its scenery, its staging, its acting, its tempi.

Italian opera in the 18th century was divided into two main types: *opera buffa* or comic opera, and *opera seria*, "serious" or tragic opera. Each type has its traditions and laws of construction. The libretto of an *opera seria* was generally based on a tragic story taken from Greek or Roman mythology or history or from the Bible. Mozart's *Idomeneo* is an *opera seria* and his last work for the stage, *La Clemenza di Tito*, is also cast in that form. But it was a form in which he was never comfortable; its stilted personages, its remoteness, its generalized emotions could not evoke his best work. *Opera buffa* had a great variety of story-types to choose from, but the characters in such an opera usually conformed more or less faithfully to their prototypes in the Italian *commedia dell'arte*. The plots were often characterized by very complicated intrigues which kept the lovers (sometimes two or three pairs of them) apart for most of the action; by much comic play and dialogue, especially on the part of the subordinate characters, usually servants or country-folk; and by the untangling of all difficulties and joyful reunion of the lovers at the end. The fantastic lengths to which the plot complications were sometimes carried and the idiotic nature of those complications may be seen in such a prime example of *opera buffa* as Mozart's *La finta Giardiniera*.

It will be seen that *Don Giovanni* is definitely not an *opera seria*. Is it then an *opera*

*buffa*? Let us glance first at da Ponte's libretto. It is largely based on an earlier libretto by Bertati, whose work, together with its music by Gazzaniga, is an out-and-out *opera buffa*. Da Ponte made many improvements over his model: his skillful pen invested the characters of the story with life and individuality; it wrote dialogue that sparkled with wit; and it provided the composer, whose genius had become familiar to the librettist through their collaboration on *Le Nozze di Figaro*, with many opportunities for his extraordinary art in characterization by means of music; it provided him, moreover, with strong contrasts, with juxtapositions of lyric arias with powerfully dramatic ones, and with ensembles that allowed full rein to Mozart's genius for concerted music in which the individual voices, while reflecting the idiosyncrasies of each character, blended into a harmonious whole. When da Ponte finished he handed Mozart a libretto in which the principal male character was a profligate nobleman, cold, clever, selfish, and fearing no one in heaven or on earth; and the chief female characters two aristocratic women, one whose whole life was bent on avenging the murder of her father, the other a noble, pathetic creature, betrayed yet willing for the sake of her passion to forgive. For subordinate characters da Ponte presented a lightly sketched portrait of a grave and loving knight, and, in place of the stock country bumpkins of the *buffo* tradition, two live, simple, and appealing peasants. The fearsome apparition of the "stone guest" and Leporello complete the *dramatis personae*. Of all these personages only Leporello, the comic servant, is a true *buffo* character.

Now if the motives and emotions of the characters as described seem overwhelmingly of a serious nature, it is true, on the other hand, that da Ponte contrived to involve them in many situations of a strongly comic cast. Almost all of the second act, for example, up to the scene in the churchyard is written in the *buffo* style. It is conceivable, therefore, that another composer might have stressed the situations and subordinated



characterization to the comic element in the plot. In other words, a Paisiello, let us say, might have produced with this same libretto a typical *opera buffa*. (With this in view, da Ponte's remark at Court that when writing *Don Giovanni* he kept Dante's *Inferno* in mind need not be taken too seriously: the poet, who was rarely guilty of belittling his own attainments, may have been merely displaying his erudition to the Emperor.) We have come now to the final determinant of the nature of a great opera—its music. Let us see what Mozart did.

The overture begins with a slow introduction in D minor, utilizing material from the grisly scene with the statue in the second finale. This overture is the only one of those that preface Mozart's mature operas which opens in a minor key. Even *Idomeneo* and *Tito* begin in major. Surely Mozart meant to establish the underlying mood of the work, just as with the cheerful prelude to *Figaro* he established the prevailing mood of that comedy. As we continue on the score we notice that the greater part of it is of a serious nature, with a liberal sprinkling of *buffo* or semi-*buffo* numbers. Few of the *buffo* movements, to be sure, are the light-hearted, burlesque trivialities of the old comic opera. Leporello's famous "catalogue" aria has a wide streak of the sardonic (especially in the orchestra!); Masetto's *Ho capito* is a wonderful blend of disgruntlement, deference, and sarcasm; the due *Là ci darem la mano* has a sophisticated grace unknown before that time and unequalled since. Wholly in the *buffo* tradition is the Don's *canzonetta*, *Deh vieni alla finestra*: it was common practice to introduce in the course of a comic opera a popular or folk-songish serenade or similar piece and here it is, complete with mandolin. Two or possibly three other numbers and most of the unaccompanied recitatives are written in *buffo* style; the rest of the music in the opera is in a more serious vein.

We must conclude from all this that the form of *Don Giovanni* is not that of the standard 18th-century *opera-buffa*. The wit, the power and sweep and expressiveness of Mozart's music elevate the work to a higher plane of drama. The fact that Mozart called it an *opera buffa* in his catalogue of his works is not very important: the composer no doubt seized upon the handiest tag available—the terms *opera buffa* and *opera seria* were those most commonly used and *Don Giovanni* could not be called an *opera seria*. Moreover, in Mozart's time names for musical forms did not have distinct, universally

recognized meanings; *opera buffa* in particular was very loosely used. In the score *Don Giovanni* is labelled a *dramma giocoso*. This, it has recently been pointed out, is merely another name for *opera buffa*. In a newly-discovered German translation of Mozart's masterpiece written two years after the opera's first performance, it is called a "tragi-komisches Singspiel." That *Don Giovanni* was not regarded as a conventional comic opera in Mozart's time is shown by contemporary reviews. One critic wrote: "This is not music to please everyone, music that merely tickles the ear and starves the heart." Another said of the music of the finale: "the dreadfulness of the scene is so truly expressed that the listener's hair actually bristles." Finally, it was *Don Giovanni* which caused Goethe to say that Mozart was the man who should have composed *Faust*. Hardly an *opera buffa* libretto!

If *Don Giovanni* is neither *opera buffa* nor *opera seria*, what is it? The answer, I think, is that it is an opera in which comic and tragic elements are mingled in such a way as to provide a work unique in style and mood. It is a work, as Alfred Einstein wrote, *sui generis*; and if a name must be found for it nothing seems to suit it better than "music-drama."

This term is generally associated with the Wagnerian opera but there is no valid reason why it cannot be applied to such a work as Mozart's: *Don Giovanni* is a drama set to music. Wagner, of course, used music-drama to designate an opera which was not a succession of "numbers"—closed forms like arias, quartets, etc.—linked by recitatives, but a closely-knit organism with an uninterrupted flow of action coupled with symphonic development of musical motives. Yet even in this sense the use of the term in connection with *Don Giovanni* is not as far-fetched as it may seem. For while Mozart's work is far closer, as regards its form, to the "number" opera than to the Wagnerian music-drama, it represents a definite advance from the one towards the other. Notice, for example, how the overture modulates from the dramatic intensity of the main body of its material (D major) into F major in order to lead directly into Leporello's opening scene. Wagner uses this formal device in *Tristan* and *Parsifal*. Notice, too, that the dominating figure in Mozart's drama is not given a single important aria, an unheard-of thing in 18th-century opera. This was undoubtedly done for the sake of dramatic verity: the aria was a vehicle for the lyric expression of emotion; Don Giovanni's solo



utterances reflect only such feelings as scorn, love of pleasure, fearlessness. The germ of the Wagnerian form may be seen in the magnificent finales of *Don Giovanni*, where at the dramatic climax of each act Mozart abandons the small closed forms and builds in in each place a great structure in which the course of the action and music remains unbroken. If we examine the opera as originally written for Prague and omit the pieces added for the later performances in Vienna, we find that the two finales occupy more than one-third of the orchestral score—the second finale, being the more important dramatically, is longer in relation to the second act than the first is in relation to the first act. Moreover it is not true that the Wagnerian opera is a flow of “endless melody.” Alfred Lorenz has abundantly shown that the later works of the Bayreuth master fall into musico-dramatic “periods” of varying lengths and patterns. And from the strictly *formal* viewpoint there is little difference between a Wagnerian “period” and a Mozart aria: both may have some such pattern as A-B-A. But where Mozart, at the end of his aria, comes to a full stop, Wagner, at the end of his “period,” builds one of his marvelous transitions; where Mozart writes a period Wagner writes a colon. And as far as esthetic effect is concerned (we are speaking always only of musical form, not of content), there are sensitive musicians who prefer Mozart’s honest closes to Wagner’s eternal “deceptive cadences.”

Let us return from the fascinating by-path of Wagnerian forms. If we disregard the special sense in which Wagner used the term, we may call *Don Giovanni* a music-drama. It would seem that the authorities at the Metropolitan do not agree with this view. I have not seen the current production, but the newspaper reviews have made it plain that at 39th Street they play it in the spirit of broad farce, in the spirit of the typical 18th-century *opera buffa*. I did hear a broadcast of it and noticed that the audience laughed at strange places. I am still wondering what caused the mirth audible at the end of Don Ottavio’s *Dalla sua pace*.

\* \* \* \*

MOZART: *Don Giovanni*; performed by the Glydebourne Festival Opera Co., direction Fritz Busch. Vol. 1, Victor Set M-423, 8 discs, price \$16. Vol. 2, Victor Set M-424, 7 discs, price \$14. Vol. 3, Victor Set M-425, 8 discs, price \$16.

This magnificent recording is sung by the following cast:

*Don Pedro (the Commendatore)* D. Franklin

*Donna Anna*.....Ina Souez  
*Don Ottavio*.....Koloman von Pataky  
*Don Giovanni*.....John Brownlee  
*Leporello*.....Salvatore Baccaloni  
*Donna Elvira*.....Luise Helletsgrüber  
*Zerlina*.....Audrey Mildmay

The opera is recorded complete except for two short snatches of unimportant recitative, nine measures omitted from the last scene, and three scenes in the second act which were added by Mozart for the Vienna performance and which are superfluous dramatically and inferior musically.

It is evident at once from the playing of the overture that Busch considers this an exciting drama, and this impression is sustained by orchestra and soloists throughout the set. Only the Masetto occasionally overdoes the *buffo* element in his part. It remains true of this set, as of the *Figaro* recording, that many of the numbers have been better sung on individual discs made in the past by great vocalists; still the singers here are all remarkably good, considering the resources of the company. Those listeners who, like the writer, have never been able to enthuse about Mme. Helletsgrüber’s talents, will find an astonishing improvement in her work here. The ease with which she encompasses an extremely difficult part, her phrasing, her verve, are all splendid. The Donna Anna is only slightly less good: the care with which she attacks high notes is a little too apparent and in the second act her voice develops a faint tremolo. Brownlee’s voice lacks the weight demanded by his part but his style is unexceptionable. The rest of the cast are of more than ordinary competence. When we consider that a first-rate cast for *Don Giovanni* probably could not be assembled by any opera house in the world today, we must marvel at the high level of achievement represented here.

This high level is especially notable in the ensembles. Each voice takes its proper place in the general scheme and no distortion mars the effect of the ravishing music.

The guiding spirit of course is Busch; his tempi are just, his command of orchestra and singers absolute. The apparent smallness of the orchestra is no drawback here: it enables us to hear the important wind instruments more clearly. The tone of the strings could, perhaps, have a higher polish, a warmer glow, but maybe these qualities are too much to expect in an opera orchestra.

The Victor people have outdone themselves in recording this work. The reproduction has balance and clarity and the breaks have been wisely chosen.



# American Folk Songs

By HERBERT HALPERT

*Editor's Note:—This paper was recently broadcast, by Mr. Halpert from WQXR, a local New York station, as one of a series, heard regularly on Fridays at 9:45 P.M., EST., known as "Exploring the Arts and Sciences." This program is broadcast under the auspices of the Radio Division of the Federal Theatre Project.*

IN talking about American folk songs it is best first to answer the question of what are folk songs, than to concern ourselves with what is *American*. In what way do folk songs differ from popular or art songs? All types of songs have words and music; all are sung.

Most scholars now agree with Louise Pound that the only safe tests of folk songs are: first, that all sense of the authorship or origin of the songs has been lost by the singers; second, that the songs must have retained vitality over a fair period of time; and lastly, that the songs have no fixed text form but are continually changing.

A song by Schubert, or Stephen Foster, or George Gershwin differs from a folk song because, by and large, although you *may* sing the song from memory, people who want to sing it correctly go back to the form the author wrote and study it. With folk songs, you can't go back to some printed original because as a rule you don't know there is one and frequently there isn't. You sing the song just as you learned it from someone, who in turn learned it from someone else, and so on. Generally by the time a song has been circulating orally for a couple of hundred years, what with the untrustworthiness of the human ear and imagination it's pretty hard to decide what the original was. Instead you find many different versions of a song and variants for each version.

I'll take up the question of variants later. Let me first return to the problem of printed songs. A certain number of songs originally composed and even published always get into oral currency—that is into the folk singers' repertory. You can see that it would not be difficult for such a song to be learned from someone and the fact soon be forgotten that there ever was a published original. In New Jersey, where I have collected a large number of folk songs, I found a song which I've learned was sung by the anthracite miners of Pennsylvania. Neither in New Jersey nor in

Pennsylvania did they know the song had been published. This is the chorus:

Down in the coal mine underneath  
the ground  
Where the gleam of sunshine never  
can be found  
Diggin' dusky diamonds all the year  
around  
Down in the coal mine underneath the  
ground

Other published songs got circulated through the medium of one of the most fascinating aspects of American theatre life—the minstrel show. Through most of the 19th century, America's chief theatrical entertainment was supplied by the troupes of wandering minstrels. They played and sang over most of the country. Their audiences or some part of them at least learned and passed on the songs by word of mouth, and nowadays a folk song collector still finds people singing about Old Dan Tucker, who they report "was a fine old man" but unfortunately,

He washed his face in a frying pan  
He combed his hair with a wagon  
wheel  
And died with a toothache in his  
heel.

And people still sing *Jump Jim Crow*, a song which has given its name to the various acts of Negro segregation still common in the South—Jim Crow trollies, Jim Crow laws.

An even more interesting phenomenon is that the negroes themselves picked up the songs of the so-called "blackface" minstrels. At present I am editing a volume of Negro folk songs for publication in a folk song series of the National Service Bureau. Part of the problem is just how to discuss the minstrel material which has been found.

Now to find the answer to the question, "What is American in American folk songs?" Well—just what are Americans? Except for the Indians, aren't they either immigrants to this country, or descendants of immigrants? So with American folk songs. Many, perhaps most, have been im-



ported or are based on imported songs. Scarcely a handful have been found that have no European ties.

Indian music is so different from the European that it is studied as a branch not of folk music but of primitive music. All the others we call American, simply because they are found in America. Very little study has been made of such songs.

Since folk songs in English are so widely sung in the United States we classify folk song by region and by occupation.

Although many folk song collections have been made by states, such as those from Maine, Virginia, Vermont, Mississippi, this is only a matter of convenience, an artificial way of delimiting a working area.

In the south the tremendous range of the Appalachian mountains contains a people living a somewhat similar form of life and having much the same folk songs in common. Several New England states also form a natural regional group. Other parts of the country can be divided similarly. It is here in the eastern states, where families have been settled in the same communities for several hundred years, that one finds the oldest British songs, some that have long since died out in the country from which they came. It may interest you even more if I tell you that these very old songs are found in large numbers not only in the mountains far from civilization but right in New Jersey and New York, at points less than thirty miles from Philadelphia and from New York City. In less than two years of intermittent collecting more than 500 folk songs have been recovered in an area in southern New Jersey called the "Piney" country—which far from being mountainous is part of the Coastal Plain. The people there have been isolated not by mountains but by pine forests and sand roads.

Most of the songs are very long stories. In English folk songs there are two very common themes: songs about false lovers such as are found all over the world, and songs about the sea. Here is a song that combines both themes:

William Taylor was a nice young feller  
Full of life and Unity  
He went to church and he got married  
He was forced away to sea  
Fol le diddle-i do  
Ri fol le di do  
Fol le diddle-i do  
Ri do de

Willy's bride-to-be dresses up as a man and goes to sea to find him. She locates him but finds he is about to be married to another girl. Fired by wronged love:

Then she called for swords and pistols  
They were brought at her command  
And she shot her own Willy Taylor  
With his lady at his hand

I have given you a verse from two different versions of the song. Please understand that each version is considered a separate song—one is not a corrupt copy of the other or of some original. The essence of folk song is that each variant is judged on its own merits—if the changes are weak the variant is inferior; if the changes are successful we have a good song. In passing I might mention that what is most important in Southern Negro spirituals is not their originality, because it seems probable most are based on the camp meeting songs of the whites. But they have been so thoroughly re-created by the Negroes in imagery, language and music, that there can be no question but that they are a rich and vital contribution by the Negro to American folk song.

Another song, also found in New Jersey, comes from the British whaling fleets. Here is a short section of it:

The boats were lowered and we all  
got in  
Which it was the delight of the crew  
For to sail in the wake there the whale  
fish was seen  
In the wake where the whale fish, blew  
my boys  
In the wake where the whale fish blew  
out  
The whale was struck and the line paid  
When he gave one flourish with his tail  
And he upset the boat and we lost five  
men  
And we did not get that whale my boys  
And we did not get that whale

This leads us to our other large folk-song group, those composed of occupational songs: the songs that sailors, cowboys, miners, lumberjacks, plantation workers sing. In the days before radio, all workers sang for amusement just as any isolated group did. And they had no particular respect for what we now call folk song: they sang any song they knew, no matter what its source. But in their singing they sometimes used songs that sprang out of the conditions of their work and expressed their attitude towards those conditions.

A few groups, especially the Negro workers, and sailors in the days of the clipper ship, had what we call work songs; songs which were supposed to lighten the task at hand. Outward bound sailors marched around the "caps'n", hauling up the anchor, singing about the place they were leaving.

O New York town is no place for me  
Way you Ry-O



I'll pack up me sea chest and go to sea  
And I'm bound for the Ry-O-Grande

But according to Joanna Colcord, after the ship was back in port and the last work was being done—the last spell at the pumps—the sailor expressed himself freely about the ship and the treatment he had received.

The winds were foul and the ship was  
slow  
Leve ho, Johnny, Leve ho!  
The grub was bad and the wages low  
It's time for us to leave her  
She shipped it green and she made us  
curse  
The mate is a devil and the captain's  
worse

The cowboys who sang:

It was in the merry month of May  
When I started for Texas far away  
I left my darling girl behind  
She said her heart was only mine

were only singing an adaption of an English sailor song beginning:

Early one morning in the spring  
I went board ship to serve the king  
Leaving my dearest dear behind  
Who swore to me her heart inclined.

But when cowboys started to sing that well known trail driving song *The Old Chisholm Trail*, which begins with:

Come along boys and listen to my tale  
I'll tell you all my troubles and the  
Old Chisholm trail

verses were bound to creep in about the bad food, hard work and about unfair deals such as:

I went to the boss to draw my roll  
He had it figgered out nine dollars in  
the hole  
Come a—  
I went to the boss and we had a little  
chat  
And I hit him in the face with my  
big slouch hat  
Come a—

This habit of not taking things lying down is characteristic of what we may call the American attitude of independence. Americans fought to gain liberty and still fight to preserve it. Consider this verse from a song called *The Buffalo Skinners* which explains what a group of hunters who had worked hard under terrible conditions did to the contractor who tried to cheat them. The version of the song comes from the Western plains and was adapted from a lumberjack's song:

The summer being near over, Old  
Crego he did sav  
The crowd had been extravagant,  
was in debt to him that day  
We coaxed him and we pleaded, we  
found it was no go  
We left old Crego's bones to bleach  
on the range of the Buffalo.

For those who believe in equality and justice, one of the most thrilling shows put on in the last two years by Federal Theatre was the dance production *How Long Brethren*. For the folk songs on which the dances were based came from a remarkable group of *Negro Songs of Protest* collected by Mr. Laurence W. Gellert. Mr. Gellert shows that the Negroes, too, refuse to suffer oppression quietly; that their work songs now protest it firmly. Here is one verse from the magnificent song *Sistern and Brethren*:

We's buryin' a brudder dey kill fo  
de crime  
We's buryin' a brudder dey kill for  
de crime  
Tryin' to keep what was his all de  
time

And this vitality of folk song which adapts new material and new conditions to the old tunes is found in many sections of America. In Kentucky, the miners' strike songs are made up to the tunes of old ballads. In other sections well known songs are parodied—a custom as old as all of folk song. From somewhere in America where there was a strike, my friend Mrs. Sydney Robertson, who was collecting songs for the Resettlement Administration, found a song based on the old lullaby *Rock-a-bye Baby*. It goes:

Rockabye baby on the tree top  
When you grow up you'll work in  
a shop  
When you get married your wife  
will work too  
So that the rich will have nothing  
to do  
Rockabye baby on the tree top  
When you grow old your wages will  
stop  
When you have spent the little  
you've saved  
First to the poorhouse, then to the  
grave.

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## MUSIC BY DELIUS

*Hassan*, a poetic tragedy of the Orient by James Elroy Flecker, will be presented with the music especially composed for it by Frederick Delius, for the first time in this country on the air, in an elaborate full-hour *Columbia Workshop* broadcast over a WABC-Columbia network Saturday, March 12, from 7:30 to 8:30 P.M. EST. The color and movement of life in Constantinople and Smyrna gave Fletcher the background and inspiration for his tragedy. The play inspired Delius to compose a complete score for the original stage presentation in London in 1923. Delius' fans have found much to admire in the musical excerpts that he wrote for this play.



# Some Aspects of Music at Home

By JOHN MELVILLE HOWARD

WILLIAM JAMES remarks that one should never allow oneself to be emotionally moved by music without expressing his feeling in some concrete act, even though it is nothing more drastic than speaking kindly to one's aunt. There is a deep logic behind this observation. If an emotion is not to degenerate into an insipid echo of a once profound stimulus it must continue to be an active ingredient of one's life. The Latin audiences with their exuberance of bravos or, less happily, old vegetables, do not deserve our cold northern disdain. Music is food for them. If it insults their palate they are indignant, more violently so because of the higher implications of spiritual over material nourishment, but in any case it goes to form energy. This is the active way of listening to music.

Here we put our finger upon what is perhaps the gravest danger of music's sequestration in the home. Even in our decorous music halls there is considerable response in the form of applause, and after the concert often an animated discussion, among those who shared the experience, regarding the quality of the music or performance. The experience occurs not oftener than once or twice a week at most, sometimes involving difficulties of attendance; hence it is looked upon as a valuable rarity to be savoured fully and subsequently remembered as an inspiration.

The ease of accessibility made possible by the radio and phonograph is apt to impair the effectiveness of any musical experience. In the first place, in sheer self-protection, some of us are obliged to shut our ears against the ubiquitous radio. The life of a current jazz hit is fortunately short, else we might resort to homicide. The classical addict is able without too much searching to hear Beethoven several times weekly, interpreted by any ensemble from five pieces upward. This is all right so long as discrimination is exercised by the listener.

The phonograph library, of course, allows much greater selectivity — if one has the means to stock it opulently. Otherwise,

through repetition, its contents are apt to grow a little pale. As Carl Engel demonstrates in *Discords Mingled*, the repetition of any musical combination carried to excess will necessarily, by the workings of a physical law, lose significance for the ear and hence for the mind. So the ticking of a clock to which one has become habituated may require a conscious effort to be heard at all.

The home audience is often no larger than one or two persons. Applause is out, so likewise is discussion, once a new recording has been analyzed. Clubs or groups who gather for the purpose of sharing musical reproductions are of course valuable, giving as they do a larger choice of recordings and the spirit of an audience. It is perhaps this feeling of spiritual closeness, of harmony with one's fellow, of entering into and contributing to an atmosphere or spell of beauty, which is most missed in the home. The speech of sweet sound with its higher suggestibility is in danger of being blunted, becoming conventionalized, formal, meaningless, as is the case with many English words which once were jewels in the mouths of poets.

On the other hand, music in the home has done so much to advance the appreciation of that art that it may be ungrateful to look upon its darker side. The radio has undoubtedly introduced many to good music for which they hungered but which otherwise would have remained foreign to their lives, and the phonograph is even more valuable as an educating medium once the seeds are sown. Great orchestras possible only in our largest cities are brought to farms and small communities all over the nation. Compositions of high quality that seldom find a place on orchestra programs are becoming increasingly available. The phonograph in the school is the indispensable apparatus of music appreciation. Modern composers find ready made a wide and swift possible means of distribution for their work; this is very important since musical appreciation is usually about fifteen years behind musical production.

It seems to me there are sensible ways of counteracting the drawbacks of music at



home. As mentioned above, a comprehensive library of recorded music costs a great deal of money, so the average phonophile is restricted to the high spots. In my opinion it is better for him to play his limited works sparingly than to repeat them until he grows restless and attention wanders after the first few notes. Clubs which combine the resources of many members to supply a choice of music and arrange programs should be more widely propagated.

Another worthwhile project would be the purchase of records by public libraries to be played either on the premises or circulated for short periods in the hands of responsible citizens. To pay for the inevitable depreciation a small sum based on the cost of the records could be charged each time a set was borrowed. This circulating-library plan might also be useful in the smaller group.

If one is limited to the resources of one's own radio-phonograph and record collection it is still possible by arbitrary means to derive the fullest pleasure therefrom. The *American Music Lover* and other periodicals publish lists of good music to be heard via radio. Let the listener censor the noisy and multifarious fare, choosing carefully which programs he is to hear and arranging his affairs so that he may give full attention to those which are worthy, not burdening his digestion with inferior fare.

In the case of the phonograph it is possible to make even a small collection of records go a long way if one buys wisely and holds his composers and interpreters in respect. The first principle should be the building of a well-rounded collection embracing works classical and modern, symphonies, concertos, quartets and sonatas, by composers of different schools. Because means are restricted it is not necessary to circumscribe one's taste. To possess all the recorded works of Beethoven, for instance, would require an expenditure beyond the reach of many with excellent little libraries. If a certain sum is set aside for periodic purchases and those purchases are made with the idea of a representative selection, taking full account of the record reviews in this magazine and elsewhere, the taste need never be cloyed by too much of a good thing.

The analysis of programs arranged by such a master of program-making as Dr. Koussevitzky will give an understanding of the value of relationships between compositions. This faculty of arrangement develops in the individual with practice, and a great beauty of records is their freedom of combination.

If we realize that the conductor must please by his concert a large number of diversified listeners, and that the individual arranger is under no such obligation, we shall see what opportunity is offered to the phonophile who studies the responses of his own psyche.

Let the music lover sit down now and then to make for himself concerts of varying lengths, designing them with conscious purpose. He will find the exercise refreshing. The music will have a heightened importance, and he will feel a greater sense of responsibility for and participation in its presentation. Mr. Reed remarked to me that playing the phonograph is in some sense taking an active share in the production of the music, and it is just in this peculiar virtue that music at home surpasses that of the concert hall. Active listening and an ordering of the proceedings will make our enjoyment as rich as may be.

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## OVERTONES

**F**OUR distinguished soloists will be presented with John Barbirolli and the New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra in their Sunday WABS network broadcasts during March.

The schedule is as follows:

March 6—Efrem Zimbalist, playing the Sibelius *Violin Concerto*. March 13—Josef Hoffmann, playing Chopin's *Piano Concerto in E minor*. March 20—Robert Casadesu, playing Ravel's *Piano Concerto for Left Hand* and Mozart's *A major Concerto*, K-488. March 27—Gregor Piatigorsky, performing the Schumann *A minor Cello Concerto*.

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Speaking of the New York Philharmonic-Symphony, we have been given to understand that several recordings were made by this organization this past month with Mr. Barbirolli as conductor.

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Bernard Herrmann, who directs the interesting musical programs of the Columbia School of the Air, is to conduct a new series of concerts, in which the twelve *Concerti Grossi* of Handel are to be played, beginning March 7, from 4:00 to 4:30 P.M. EST, over the WABC-Columbia network.

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Charles O'Connell, RCA Victor recording executive and frequent guest conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra, was presented

(Kindly turn to page 420)



# The Library Shelf

METROPOLITAN OPERAGRAMS, Briefs of the Opera 1937-38. The Metropolitan Opera Guild, Inc., Hotel Pierre, New York City. Price 50c.

ALL listeners to the Metropolitan Opera broadcasts and all music lovers who admire opera will find this little book interesting and worthwhile. Its plan is to give the reader a diagram or "visual guide" to all operas being presented this season at the Metropolitan, a brief synopsis of the each opera, and a brief sketch about the composer. The diagrams show the reader: 1. The presence of each character on the stage, whether silent or singing. 2. The sequence of arias, choruses and ballets. 3. The omissions (when possible) as made at Metropolitan performances. 4. The length of each scene (cut or uncut, in the case of Wagner) as performed at the Metropolitan. Besides this there is a list of books about operas, an historical summary of the Metropolitan, and a list of domestic recordings available of music from the various operas.

For those unfamiliar with the purposes of The Metropolitan Opera Guild, we quote from the preface of this book. This organization was formed "to develop and cultivate a wider public interest in opera and its allied arts, and to contribute to their support; to further musical education and appreciation; and to sponsor and give assistance to operatic, musical, and cultural programs and activities of an educational character."

The worthiness of this organization, headed by Miss Lucrezia Bori and Mrs. August Belmont, is unquestionable. It can be honestly said that the enjoyment of opera via radio has been considerably increased by its activities, and the appreciation of opera as a cultural entertainment has been considerably widened.

Membership in the Guild in New York City and its vicinity costs \$10.00; this includes among other privileges attendance to several dress rehearsal performances during the season. For out-of-towners (people living over 50 miles from New York City), there is a Long Distance Membership for \$2.00, which includes one season's subscription to *Opera News*, a weekly magazine published during the opera season, one copy of *Operagrams*, and the Guild's ticket pur-

chase and reservation service while the member may be visiting the city.

The little pamphlet magazine, *Opera News*, contains personality articles and reminiscences by various artists. Emilio de Gogorza, the baritone, has been contributing some interesting reminiscences in the pages of this weekly this year concerning his and other noted artists' record experiences.

ESSAYS IN MUSICAL ANALYSIS, Volume 5—Vocal Music. By Sir Donald Tovey. Oxford University Press. Price \$4.00.

THIS is the fifth in a series of six books wherein are assembled program notes that the author originally wrote for his own Edinburgh concerts. If the reader has never read a Tovey book or even scanned the pages of one he has assuredly missed a great treat; for Tovey is one of the most human and communicative writers on music. As one English critic has said—though his books "delve high and deep, they use language that an ordinary cultivated music lover can understand." Although musical illustrations are a planned part of the text, comprehension of them is not essential to full appreciation of the books. The text is the thing—keenly alert, scholarly, imaginative, and upon occasion adroitly humorous. The author inevitably stirs the thoughts of the reader and either awakens his curiosity about unknown scores or send him back to familiar ones with a new purpose in mind.

The present book covers a number of important choral works: Bach's *B minor Mass* and *Magnificat*, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, the Verdi and Brahms *Requiems*, Haydn's *Seasons* and *Creation*, and Handel's *Israel*. On the latter work, Tovey's notes are most interesting and illuminating. There are also notes on the Dungeon Scene from *Fidelio* and the third act of *Otello*, and on works by Weelkes, Willbye, Palestrina, the *Blessed Damsel* (*La Damselle élue*) of Debussy and compositions by the English composers Holst, Parry, Smyth and Bantock. A short note on Schubert's song *Der Erlkönig* is of especial interest in its refutation of the recent praise of Loewe's setting of the same poem in opposition to Schubert's.

The book has many keenly human observations, which, among the author's most ardent followers, are more familiarly known as "Toveyisms".

—P. H. R.



# New Music

By HARRISON POTTER

THERE are times (not many) when one sympathizes with the average singer in the process of building an English or American group of songs for a program. Always the cry goes up: "There are no good songs in English."

Usually so much effort goes into making the rest of the program, and finding novelties in a foreign language, that the nearest songs are seized upon, or it becomes an accompanist's holiday plus a couple of top notes as "Hosanna-catchers", and the result is a woefully unbalanced program.

Perhaps the suggestion that the program be built from the bottom up, English group first, is a rather obvious one. But the fact is, there is no real dearth of good songs in English.

Carl Fischer has recently issued several songs which merit attention. Among them are two songs by Richard Hageman which are well out of the ordinary. *This Thing I Do* is a striking song requiring an exceptionally able interpreter and while it contains some surprising commonplaces, its general level is high. A *Song Without Words* for coloratura voice and piano, is an extremely good addition to the limited literature of good things for this type of voice.

Elinor Remick Warren, whose good taste in song writing is widely recognized, has written several songs which give new evidence of her abilities. Among these, *Lament for Love* and *The Nights Remember* are most outstanding and *Things We Wished* only slightly less so.

Lazar Saminsky, usually among the ultra-moderns, has written three songs called *Songs of Three Queens* which have a fine simplicity eminently suited to the texts. These are titled *Anne Boleyn's Dirge*, *Mary Stuart's Farewell to France* and *Queen Esther's Laugh*. The first two have traditional texts, and the third, an original one.

Robert MacGimsey, whose songs are appearing with increasing frequency on concert programs, has written a song with a good rhythmic swing, *Shadrack*, which is bound to be popular.

In the same folksy vein is another excellent negro song with a lazy "blues" rhythm, *Along de Way to Hebbin* by Charles Kingsford.

Geraldine Farrar has provided "vocal settings" for two instrumental pieces. (Will the transcribers never quit?) *Supplication* is a setting of Bach's so-called *Air on the G String*, and *The Shepherd's Madrigal* is a setting of a Kreisler melody.

In the Bach setting there is a word grouping which is a not-very-successful effort and a bad placing of accents which could be easily rectified. The Kreisler song is graceful, and will, no doubt, be useful.

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## OVERTONES

(Continued from Page 418)

recently with the Palm of an Officer of the French Academy, in recognition of his services to French music. The presentation of the scroll and ribbon emblematic of the honor was made by the French Consul Marcel De Vernueil in Philadelphia.

\* \* \* \*

New symphonic recordings issued recently in Europe include Mozart's early *Symphony in A major*, K-201, played by the London Philharmonic, direction Sir Thomas Beecham (Columbia LX687-89); music from the ballet, *The Triumph of Neptune*, by Arthur Bliss, played by the same orchestra, also directed by Beecham (Columbia LX-697-8); Beethoven's *Egmont Overture* played by the Vienna Philharmonic, direction Felix Weingartner (Columbia LX690); Brahms' *Academic Festival Overture* played by Vienna Philharmonic, direction Bruno Walter (HMV DB 3394); and Bizet's *Symphony in C major* played by London Philharmonic, direction Goehr (HMV C2986-9).

\* \* \* \*

Re-recordings of celebrated concertos by different artists still continue. The latest to be released in England are: Dvorak's *Cello Concerto* in a performance by Pablo Casals and the Czech Philharmonic (HMV DB8420-24), and Tchaikowsky's *Piano Concerto in B flat minor* played by Egon Petri and the London Philharmonic (Columbia LX681-84). A concerto new to records is William Walton's *Viola Concerto*. It is played on Decca X199-201 by F. Riddle and the London Symphony, direction of the composer.

\* \* \* \*

Wanda Landowska continues her series of harpsichord recordings with Handel's *Concerto in B flat, Opus 4, No. 6*, and the same composer's *Air and Variations in B flat* (HMV discs DB3307-8).



# Record Collectors' Corner

## "SOME RECORDS WE SHALL NEVER HEAR"

By CEDRIC WALLIS

ALL record-collectors must have had the experience, at one time or another, of wishing vainly that a particular artist would record a particular song or aria. The musical field that may be ranged by a singer of the first rank is today so wide that it is not surprising that a large number of seemingly desirable flowers should, for one reason or another, have remained unplucked. The present purpose is to review in imagination a few interesting and not too improbable records that were never, to the writer's knowledge, committed to wax, together with a few reflections on the opera and the singer in question.

1. *Madama Butterfly*, *Un bel di vedremo*. Sung by the late Dame NELLIE MELBA.

In spite of his consummate mastery of theatrical effect, Puccini has in the heroine of *Madama Butterfly* created a character that is a contradiction. The Japanese child-wife is a delicate and fragile conception, a creature in porcelain, the pathos of whose situation has the other-worldly quality of a fairy-tale, at least to Western minds. The Latin splendors of Puccini's score sit strangely upon the shoulders of Belasco's pretty doll, or would do if we were less accustomed to this particular wedding of Italy with the East. The story gives us one character and the music another. This means that every singer who approaches the part must do so consciously from one angle or the other. She may play it in the grand manner, as Destinn did, making the most of the surging drama of the musical score, or she may make a miniature of it, stressing the wistful charm of the oriental girl and trusting to pure tone and clear enunciation to get the vocal line over the heavy baggage of Puccini's rich scoring.

The latter method of treating the part has been very successfully exploited by a number of light sopranos,—Maggie Teyte is one whose name at once occurs to me. The point is that the choice *must* be made. Singers who try to compromise by singing like Tosca and, acting like Mimi arrive nowhere. They cannot co-ordinate music and action unless both are on the same plane, and it is just

that power of co-ordination that makes a great operatic artist from a good singer.

Melba would have appreciated at once that hers must be an oriental rather than an Italian Butterfly. She would never have looked or acted the part with much conviction, but the silver quality of her voice, with its strange power of riding an apparently overwhelming orchestra, would have given our ears something curiously moving to remember, if we had heard her in this air. There would be a bell-like opening,—smaller bells than those in Destinn's rich chime but pure and sweet. The instruction in the score *Come da lontano* would be beautifully realized by this ethereal tone. At the end of the second phrase, *sull'estremo confine*, we should probably smile once again at the Australian tang in the diva's Italian,—but at least she had the courage of her convictions and never slurred her words in any language. *E poi la nave appare* would leave us marvelling at the firm soprano quality of her low notes. The increased animation of the next two or three phrases would no doubt betray some of the singer's characteristic mannerisms. Her voice and temperament were both against her when the expression of strong emotion was in question. Realizing a deficiency, she developed several small tricks designed to simulate the dramatic quality that was lacking in her pure singing. *Romba il suo saluto* would thus be given with a certain shrillness, and there would be a swooping from note to note in *Vedi? E venuto!* This would-be-emotional way of swooping up to significant notes in a phrase became a noticeable flaw in Melba's later recordings. She did it so often that it lost any dramatic significance that may originally have justified an occasional departure from the clean attack for which she was at one time famous.

The recitative-like passages that follow would be clear and true, but we should miss the dramatic temperament that lay behind Destinn's singing of the simplest narrative phrase. Melba would score, however, at *un*



uomo un picciol punto, the end of which phrase would have again the lovely sense of distance that we noticed at the beginning of the air. From this point the song would move characteristically to its close,—a little shrill in its dramatic moments with that unique, unforced shrillness noticeable in so many Melba records,—the *parlando* phrases bearing something less than the full implication of the words because of the still beauty of the singing,—the final B flat clear, unforced and dead in tune. I wonder if anyone ever heard her sing *Un bel di*, and if so, whether it was in the least like this imaginary impression?

\* \* \* \*

2. *Otello, Niun mi tema.* Sung by the late ENRICO CARUSO.

Like Cio-Cio-San, Verdi's *Otello* is really two characters, but his inconsistency, unlike hers, is a purely musical one. To do justice to the *Esultate* and the scenes of jealous frenzy with Iago and Desdemona, he must be a high dramatic baritone. For the love-music the lighter *cantilena* of a lyric tenor is needed. There is no singer to-day who seems able to deal equally well with *Si pel ciel marmoreo giuro* and *Già nella notte densa*. The quasi-baritones have been more frequent in their attacks on the part than the true tenors and fierce enough some of those attacks have been. It has remained for Martinelli to show us that much more can be achieved by pure singing than by shouting, even at a certain sacrifice of dramatic power. The rougher method of storming through the climaxes by main force and failing to bring any poetry of utterance to the lyric moments can satisfy no one except, perhaps, the opera-lovers of modern Italy.

The man who should have been the *Otello* of the age has been dead for sixteen years,—Enrico Caruso, whose name is still high above those of dozens of "successors." Caruso never sang *Otello*, presumably for fear of its effect on his voice, but he was in his later days a high dramatic baritone without having lost much of his lyric tenor quality. Perhaps his fears about *Otello* were well-founded, for his records do not suggest that he ever had the beautifully poised musical discretion that is Martinelli's standby to-day. Let us consider how Caruso would have dealt with *Otello's* great death-scene.

*Niun mi tema se anco armato mi vede.* With what a splendid solemnity the opening notes would ring out in the unmatched gold of Caruso middle voice. It was a voice steeped and saturated in the warm, Italian sun, but here we should notice the deeper

velvet of the shadows that have followed that sun upon its endless course. *Ecco la fine del mio cammin.* Here we might be greeting the rich baritone of Battistini himself, but we soon welcome the trumpet-notes of the tenor in the following *Oh! Gloria!*, the last dying echo of *Otello's* opening *Esultate!* There would follow lyric sweetness in the apostrophe to the dead Desdemona, leading up to the despairing *Ah! morta! morta! morta!* where the too-famous sob in the great voice would find much more legitimate expression than in the tawdry emotionalism of *Pagliacci*. Back to the tensely dramatic for a single phrase *Ho un'arma ancor!* and then onward to the heartrending beauty of the close. *Un altro bacio*,—one can hear Caruso in the dying fall of the phrase, each note welling up like a perfectly-formed drop of some rich, molten liquid, round and full. One hopes the singer would have been sparing of gasps and sobs at the very end. They may possibly enhance the dramatic effect of a performance that is seen, but are almost a mistake on a record. A voice like Caruso's could express almost the inexpressible without such adventitious aids. Alas that we shall never hear his *Otello* except in imagination!

\* \* \* \*

## COLLECTORS' RECORDINGS

Reviewed by Julian Morton Moses

FROM the phenomenal performance that once marked the gay and ecstatic career of Luisa Tetrazzini in operatic as well as other ways are repeated two achievements, the one electric, the other elegiac. The first is the *Vien diletto* from *I Puritani* with interpolations by the soprano. Florid enough in its own right, this march tune is rendered with such *staccati* and *fiorituri* as would shame even a clarinetist. While it lacks the suavity of the Barrientos recording, it would be still greater if it included the *Qui la voce*. What is deficiency on one side is carried to the opposite extreme on the other, where we are treated to two versions of the *Addio del passato* from *La Traviata*. Though this was one of the singer's great roles and served to conquer for her a Covent Garden audience, Tetrazzini is not even adequate here. Perhaps by 1913 her breath was already gone. The record is autographed by the artist and is issued as IRCC No. 116, 12-inch, price \$2.25.

If you want to hear how good American tenors could be without being really adequate, try IRCC No. 117, 12-inch, price \$2.25.



Both the efforts of Riccardo Martin in the *Addio della madre* from *Cavalleria Rusticana* and those of Ellison Van Hoose who does a much better job by *Celeste Aida* are too obvious to meet the standards of 1906-1910 through they would pass muster today. Martin's voice lacks freedom, but Van Hoose, justly famous for his head tones and lyric beauty, sings well although obviously miscast as Rhadames.

Riccardo Martin also enjoys one side of a 10-inch disc, HRS No. 2006, price \$2.00, while the recently deceased Nicola Zerola has the other side. Tenor stars seem to be in the ascendency this month. Martin sings more successfully the inconsequential tenor aria, *Amore e grillo*, from the first act of *Mme. Butterfly*. Zerola, on the other hand, renders in his usual tight-throated manner the *Figli*

*miei* from the first act of *Samsón e Dalilah*. Martin was famous for his fine performance of the American Naval officer, but Zerola was never considered an outstanding Samson.

\* \* \* \*

Owing to a change of address, the American Record Collectors' Association was forced to suspend its monthly auction sheet during February. A list of unusual merit containing many rare records, some of which will be at set prices, will be issued about March 8th. Anyone not already on the mailing list may receive a copy by sending a self-addressed envelope, or 25c for a year's subscription, to the Secretary at 235 East 51st St., New York City. The secretary welcomes visitors at this address, but suggests that they first phone for an appointment—ELdorado 5-6754.

## Swing Music Notes

By ENZO ARCHETTI

**THIS** month this column will be devoted to an important release of swing records.

In December, we announced the appearance of a new brand of records labeled *Swing*, sponsored by the French magazine *Jazz Hot*, and devoted exclusively to the best in swing. Five of the twelve issued so far have reached us for review and they are so important that we will lose no time in giving them the attention they deserve.

*Honeysuckle Rose* (Waller-Razaf, arr. Carter), and *Crazy Rhythm* (Meyer-Kahn), played by Coleman Hawkins and his All Star Band. Disc SW. 1.

Personnel: Coleman Hawkins and Alex Combell (tenor sax); Bennie Carter and Andre Ekyan (also sax); Stephane Grappelly (piano); Django Reinhardt (guitar); d'Hellemmes (bass); Tommy Benford (drums).


A glance at the personnel is sufficient to show that with such a combination of first rate soloists, the result should be good. A quartet of four of the finest sax players in the jazz world today, two American and two French, and two members of the famous Quintette du Hot Club of France! An unusual and true jam band combination. And

the result is good jam. Of the two, *Crazy Rhythm* is the more exciting. It opens with the sax quartet playing the theme and followed by a succession of solos by Ekyan, Combelle, Carter, and Hawkins. *Honeysuckle Rose* begins similarly with a chorus by the quartet but in the second chorus the lead is taken by Hawkins, the trio of saxes creating a soft background of sustained notes for him. The rhythm section lends admirable support, Django's guitar and d'Hellemmes' bass being so good that they almost attract attention away from the soloists.

*Chicago* (Fischer), and *Charleston* (Mack-Johnson), played by Quintette du Hot Club de France. Disc SW. 2. Personnel: Django Reinhardt, Marcel Bianchi, Pierre Barault (guitars); Stephane Grappelly (violin); Louis Vola (bass).

The excellence of the Quintette is now well known to Americans from their many recordings which have been repressed on Victor and Decca. Yet, as good as most of those records have been it would not be an exaggeration to say that this is the best they have ever done. Django's guitar work in *Chicago* leaves one speechless. One would not have thought it possible for a guitar to produce such terrific swing. Grappelly leads with the first





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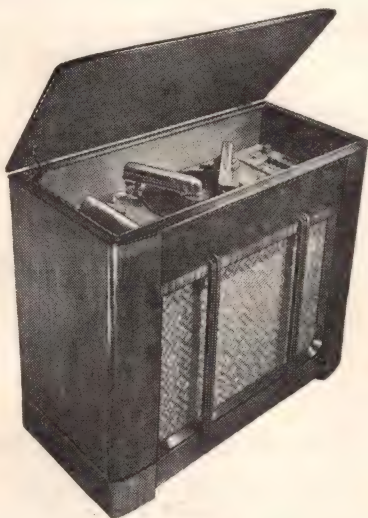
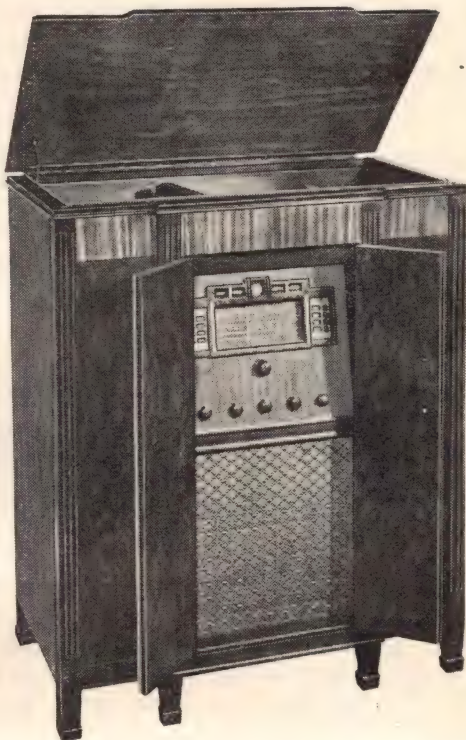
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chorus in *Chicago* and plays the fourth and fifth. Django takes the second and third and from his first note he dominates the record. *Charleston* resolves itself into a series of dialogues for guitar and violin. The tempo of both sides is exactly right. There is a lift to both numbers which causes one to exclaim: "Here is real swing!"

*Weather Beaten Blues* (Weatherford), and *Tea for Two* (Youmans), played by Teddy Weatherford (piano). Disc SW. 5.

Weatherford may be a strange name to most Americans but after listening to this record they will certainly open their arms wide and welcome back a long lost brother to that sacred confrérie now composed exclusively of Fats Waller, Teddy Wilson, Earl Hines, Jess Stacey, Joe Sullivan, and a few others of that rare genre known as swing pianists. For, as a matter of fact, Weatherford is White, a pianist, and an American who has spent a large part of his life as a musician in China and who now on the way home via Paris. His stay in China has served him well, for instead of being just another imitator of Teddy Wilson or Fats Waller he is a musician who stands squarely on his own feet, with a style and swing that can be compared to no one else's. This record is his best passport for his return to America. The *Blues* is one of the finest of its kind recorded. It is a classic! *Tea for Two* is a model of light swing and captivating grace.

*Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* (Arlen—Koehler), and *Bugle Call Rag* (Schoebel-Pettis-Myers), played by Dicky Wells and his Orchestra. Disc SW. 6.

Personnel: Dicky Wells (trombone); Bill Dillard. Bill Coleman, "Shad" Collins (trumpets); Django Rheinhardt (guitar); Richard Fullbright (bass); Bill Beason (drums).

Wells is that trombone man whose work stands out so markedly in that remarkable series of records Spike Hughes' Negro Orchestra made for Decca in England. He also has been with Luis Russell, Fletcher Henderson, and Teddy Hill. His style and tone can be best compared with J. C. Higginbotham's. They have the same power and dirty tone. That tone dominates both sides of this record. The best of the two sides is *Between the Devil*. What this disc has to recommend it is its novelty. It is an all brass band—no reeds—with a discreet but effective rhythm section. The effect of a trombone with a three trumpet background must be heard to be believed. *Bugle Call Rag* is a different matter. On first hearing, it sounds messy but after a few playings the parts fit together admirably.

*Sweet Georgia Brown* (Pickard), and *Eddie's Blues* (South), played by Eddie South (violin) with Django Rheinhardt (guitar). Disc SW. 8.

I must confess to a certain prejudice against the violin in swing music. Joe Venuti, Stuff Smith, and Eddie South have, up to now, done little to remove that prejudice but I must admit, that, after hearing this record, I am weakening. Maybe the violin has possibilities as a swing instrument after all. At least, Eddie South has a way of playing the *Blues* which seems to get under the skin. And he really swings. But I have a sneaking suspicion that if it were not for Django's excellent accomplishments he wouldn't. *Sweet Georgia Brown* does not move me at all.

On the strength of these five records I can safely say that this new record—*Swing*—is due to go places and cut itself a safe niche in the temple of swing music. There is a certain sincerity about these recordings that immediately places them above the usual run of swing music. There is not the slightest concession to commercialism. These seem to be creations by amateurs in the strict sense of the word—for the love and joy of doing them.

To suggest that some domestic company arrange to repress these records would seem to be like asking one to take coals to Newcastle. But that really isn't so, because of their superlative qualities. For those who cannot wait for any such demonstration of altruism on the part of an American company—the records are available through the International Records Agency, the Commodore Music Shop, or directly from the magazine *Jazz Hot*, 15, Rue du Conservatoire, Paris (9e), France (25 Frs. per record).

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# Record Notes and Reviews

Reviewers in this Issue: NATHAN BRODER, PAUL GIRARD,  
HERBERT HALPERT, PHILIP MILLER and PETER HUGH REED

## ORCHESTRA

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 1 in C major, Opus 21*; played by the Philadelphia Orchestra, direction Eugene Ormandy. Victor set M-409, four discs, price \$8.00.

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 1 in C major, Opus 21*; played by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, direction Felix Weingartner. Columbia set No. 321, three discs, price \$5.00.

SIDNEY GREW, writing in *The British Musician* of Weingartner's performance of Beethoven's *First Symphony*, says—"How wisely, again, does the conductor leave the music in its own generation of the 1790s. That generation had its common accents, as it had its common clothes; and only in those accents does Weingartner make it speak. Other conductors seem to try to see beyond No. 1 to No. 3, even to No. 5. That is like trying to see Hamlet in Jacques, or Satan in Comus. It is like estimating a young man by a tried and proved veteran. Here, it seems to me, is the veritable Beethoven in the first full dawn of his personality as man and musician."

The geniality of this music, the youthful eagerness and the melodic grace are attested by Weingartner. Ormandy, on the other hand, refutes almost all these qualities; he is one of those "other conductors" of whom Mr. Grew speaks. For his performance of the affable *First* is patterned along the lines of the *Third*, the *Fifth* and even the *Ninth*. Ormandy drives the music too hard, and the results in those sections where the music "sings" and should do nothing but sing, as Toscanini says, leave much to be desired. One will admit that the minuet section of this work is anything but an 18th-century minuet, that it is in fact a scherzo, but surely not such a heavily weighted one as Ormandy makes it. Where is the "romance, the fire, and the poetry" that Elgar is said to have admired so greatly?

As admirable as Weingartner's reading of the *First* is, as understanding and wise his

musicianship and appreciation of Beethoven's music, one could hardly call his readings of any of the composer's symphonies truly definitive ones. Personally, I value his readings for their humanity; it is the music one thinks about for the moment and not the conductor. Important? Yes. But there are men of genius, like Toscanini, Beecham and others, who when they perform a work make us doubly thankful for the performance. It seems a pity that Victor's set of this symphony was not made by Toscanini, for he gives a truly definitive performance of this early work, a performance that makes the music that much more cherishable.

Weingartner does not observe the repeats in the first or second movements, hence he gets the whole symphony onto three discs. Ormandy makes these repeats, but at the same time the spacing of the symphony here is stretched. The last movement, for example, occupying a single side in the Vienna Philharmonic performance, is divided in the Philadelphia one with considerable space waste in the center of both sides of the record. This naturally adds unnecessary expense to the recording. The short repeat in the last movement was surely unnecessary there.

Both sets are well recorded. The excessive reverberation behind the Vienna Philharmonic in earlier sets of Beethoven symphonies made by Weingartner is not so much in evidence here.

—P. H. R.

\* \* \* \*

CHOPIN: (Freely transcribed by Leopold Stokowski) *Mazurka in A minor, Opus 17, No. 4*; played by the Philadelphia Orchestra, direction Leopold Stokowski. Victor disc No. 1855, 10-inch, price \$1.50.

THIS is hardly Chopin, for the pattern and intention of the piece are altered to suit the whims of the transcriber (short sequences are repeated and other alterations in the form of the work are made); nor can this be rightly termed a mazurka, for the true rhythm of the Polish dance is not adhered to. Just why Stokowski felt impelled to trans-



cribe this essentially pianistic composition into an orchestral show-piece it would be hard to say. If he had to transcribe a mazurka why this particular one? As Philip Barr said in his article on the Chopin mazurkas in the May, 1936 issue of this magazine, this composition, "with all its beauty, now wears something of a 'dying duck' aspect. It has become too much the nocturne." Stokowski does not, in our estimation, succeed in altering this impression. Assuredly this is not one of Chopin's best mazurkas.

Perhaps its despairing note intrigued the transcriber, and he felt compelled to sustain it in an orchestral mélange of tonal color. Huneker was similarly intrigued with the work; he found it "restless in mood," with moments of "morbid irresolution modulating into a desperate gaiety."

As an orchestral performance, abounding in total subtleties and rich sonorities, this transcription is undeniably imposing. And, as a recording, it is indisputably one of the best. But as an enhancement of an already satisfactory composition, it strikes us as superfluous.

—P. H. R.

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DVORAK: *Carnival Overture*, Opus 92; played by the Boston "Pops" Orchestra, direction of Arthur Fiedler. Victor disc, No. 12159, price \$1.50.

THE popularity of this gay and robust overture continues to grow. Five recordings of it have been issued in the past decade. Of these the best to date must be considered this version by the Boston "Pops" under the dynamic direction of Arthur Fiedler. This is judged not from the standpoint of newer recording, but from a consideration of interpretation and the more notable quality of the performing orchestras. Fiedler fairly goes to town here, making the spirited opening a rousing affair and properly contrasting the repose necessary to a successful exposition of the romantic middle section.

Dvorak wrote this overture with two others in 1891. The three were to form a cycle, to be played as one work, to which he gave the collective title of *Nature, Love and Life*. The first overture, *Amid Nature*, seems to have early been discarded by conductors. The third, *Othello*, founded on the death scene of that tragedy, has survived in an occasional performance. The middle overture, *Carnival*, on the other hand, has steadily gained in popularity. It pictures a Czech fair with the merrymaking of the peasants. The middle

section has been described as a tonal picture of two lovers who stray apart from the crowd only to be overtaken again and included in the festivities. There is no denying the effectiveness of this music; it is Dvorak in one of his happiest and merriest moods, and though it brings us reminiscences of other composers, like Bizet and Berlioz, it is in most respect typical of its composer.

Here is a happy musical scene performed with appreciative spirit and fire. The recording is excellent.

—P. H. R.

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MOZART: *Symphony in G minor*, K-550; played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, direction Sir Thomas Beecham. Columbia set 316, three discs, price \$5.00.

MOZART'S *G minor Symphony* is surely one of the most soul-satisfying experiences of the concert hall. It is not only one of Mozart's greatest symphonies but one of the greatest symphonies of all time. It has had a strange fate in recording, for in our opinion we have never possessed, prior to this set, a truly all-around satisfying exposition of it. More than a half-dozen recordings of the work exist, the best of which by Richard Strauss and Bruno Walter suffer through poor recording. Walter's reading of the work has been praised as the more persuasive of the two, and the more emotionally expressive, but it is so ineffectually recorded that one derives little pleasure from playing it. The Stock-Chicago Symphony performance lacks vitality, and the Koussevitzky-London Philharmonic is too radical in its occasional departures from the composer's intentions.

Beecham, in our estimation one of the greatest living conductors and a superb exponent of Mozart, succeeds here in illuminating the composer's intentions in a striking and vivifying manner. His extraordinary instinctive dramatic sense serves him well; he realizes fully the drama of the music, nor does he forget its underlying note of pathos. There is so much that is stirring in his conception of this music that one hardly knows where to begin with one's encomiums.

He plays the first movement as it is indicated, *molto allegro*. The plangent, restless quality of the music becomes an integral component, not an added part, as in Koussevitzky's case. The pathos may be underlined in this movement, but its spirit should be wholly energetic. Toscanini feels the music in much the same manner, but Beecham alone gives us a sense of easy breathing here, for he does not pace his first movement quite as



fast as the Italian maestro. The heart-easing loveliness, that exquisite Mozartean tranquility, of the slow movement is accomplished with solicitous and comprehending regard for its beauty. A lighter handed treatment of the minuet may be preferable—this Toscanini attains—but Beecham's uncanny sense of inner rhythm serves him well. The superb last movement, surely one of Mozart's greatest, despite the glory of the *Jupiter* finale, is played here with telling virtuosity and a requisite delicacy of nuance. Our gratitude to Beecham is unbounded. And how grateful we are to the recorders for preserving so faithfully Beecham's splendid performance in its transference to the wax, and also for maintaining such a fervently realistic tonal quality. The surfaces of these records are good.

—P. H. R.

\* \* \* \*

**TSCHAIKOWSKY:** *Hamlet-Overture-Fantasia*, Opus 67; played by the London Symphony Orchestra, direction Albert Coates. Victor set M-395, two discs, price \$3.50.

**ALTHOUGH** this recording dates back to 1933, it is nonetheless a vital one. It was made at approximately the same time as Tchaikowsky's *Third Symphony*, which on a first-rate machine cannot be definitely called "dated" today.

Coates has a special flare for this sort of music. His Tchaikowsky is always vividly portrayed with fine rhythmic enunciation and a vital emotional fervor divorced as much as possible from sentimentality. Coates finds a healthy objectivism where others find neuroticism. His interpretations of the *Fifth* and *Sixth Symphonies* were unusual achievements, which unfortunately the recording, in the period when they were made, did not do justice to. In our estimation his performances should be re-recorded under present-day conditions. This we are given to understand, however, has been delayed by the state of the conductor's health.

Tschaikowsky's *Hamlet Overture* does not do for Shakespeare what his *Romeo and Juliet* does. As a piece of program music it cannot be viewed with any favor, but as an abstract dramatic fantasia it is most effective. Its illustration of its subject has never been considered as appropriate as that of his *Francesca da Rimini* (Victor discs 11091-92) or his *Romeo and Juliet*. Yet the music deserves to be known, and to all lovers of the composer's symphonies and tone poems we recommend it.

There are those who say the recording is dated and that the work is inconsequential;

we do not however concur with either statement.  
—P. H. R.

## CHAMBER MUSIC

**BRAHMS:** *Trio in A minor*, Opus 114; played by Ralph McLane (clarinet), Sterling Hunkins (cello), and Milton Kaye (piano). Musicraft set No. 15, three discs. price \$5.00.

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date. The artists, all American, unite to give a wholly admirable reading of Brahms' last trio. The prevailing mood of the music, mellow, dark-hued and passionate but restrained, and its masterly design are set forth here with artistic acumen.

Brahms is the master craftsman here, working with less inspired material than in his *Clarinet Quintet*. The work dates from his last years, when owing to encroaching illness his creative powers were beginning to wane. Of the four chamber works he wrote utilizing the clarinet this, the first, is the least inspired, and yet it remains a more effective one than his two sonatas for clarinet and piano, Opus 120, when well played.

Brahms' friendship in his later life with Richard Mühlfeld, clarinetist of the Duke of Meiningen's orchestra, caused him to take considerable interest in his friend's instrument. Brahms contended that the clarinet blended well with the piano, and thereupon set about to prove it. His first venture, the trio, owes its first two movements to material the composer had planned originally for a fifth symphony. The *Adagio* suggests symphonic material, although one could hardly contend that its qualities were of true symphonic worth. The blending of the clarinet and the cello here is skillfully attained, and the performance of this movement is so splendidly realized that the music is made to seem more persuasive than it really is. The *Andantino Grazioso*, which follows in place of the usual scherzo, lacks thematic distinction but is ingeniously devised. The finale assumes symphonic proportions. It is too complex in its interweaving of themes and rhythmic alternations for its own good. The players are to be commended on their performance here, although we feel they might have paced the music slightly faster to its advantage.

—P. H. R.

## CONCERTO

MOZART: *Piano Concerto in D minor*, K-466; played by Bruno Walter and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. Victor set M-420, four discs, price \$6.50.

DESPITE the excellence of this set and the popularity of the work, this is assuredly a curious release considering the fact that Victor's catalogue contains such an outstanding performance of this concerto by Edwin Fischer and the London Philharmonic Orchestra. That the Fischer set is not outdated by this more recent recording is proved when one plays the two in succession.

Walter has been a great exponent of Mozart for many years, and it has been our pleasure upon more than one occasion to enjoy him in the dual capacity of pianist and conductor in this work. He is in excellent form here and gives us a notable reading, but comparison with the Fischer set finds the great Swiss pianist excelling Walter on many points. In the first place, Fischer, by virtue of the fact that he is concentrating on his pianistic art more completely than Walter, plays with considerably more finesse—his runs and scales for example, are executed with more notable clarity and fluency. Both men direct their own orchestra, and it must be said at the outset that although Walter may be accredited with a firmer grasp of the orchestral reins, Fischer at the same time shows his complete comprehension of the instrumental side of the work and achieves and maintains an admirable precision. Walter's performance of the opening movement is heavier-handed than Fischer's, but his rendition of the second movement is more intense in its romanticism. Here, too, his pace is slightly slower than Fischer's. This rondo-romance has a suavity, however, which Fischer feels and conveys in a wholly admirable manner. His pacing allows for the repeats in the middle section, whereas Walter's does not, in the same record space. If Fischer's recording did not exist I am certain that Walter's would be considered entirely satisfactory.

A definite point in favor of Fischer's set remains the superior qualities of the London Philharmonic players in comparison with the Vienna Philharmonic's. The woodwind section of the London orchestra is markedly better in the second section of the Romance and in many passages throughout the concerto.

As a recording, the Walter set has been excellently accomplished and it may be possible that in a final analysis it will be conceded to have the edge on the earlier set (which is less than two years old), but personally this edge would not induce me to give up the Fischer set.

Eric Blom, in his admirable book on Mozart, finds Mozart a futurist composer in the *D minor Concerto*, "a romantic before what historians conveniently but loosely label as the romantic period . . . He is in the mood already into which Beethoven dropped temporarily and Schumann permanently . . . For the first time in a piano concerto, for almost the only time in any concerto, he had chosen a minor key, and the particular key in which he was later to express Donna



Anna's agitated grief, the ghostly appearance of the stone guest and the vengeful passion of the Queen of Night."

After the "shuddering" and "unhappy commotion" of the first movement comes the lovely Romance, with a wild middle section in G minor which Blom terms a "sudden fit of raving despair." The whole work is a dramatically impassioned one, for even the last movement, which is written in a major key, remains stressful underneath.

An admirable point of departure in labeling is to be found in the Walter set. The cadenzas which he uses are accredited to their author, Reinicke. Fischer uses other cadenzas, no less admirable in my estimation, the source of which is not given on the label.

—P. H. R.

\* \* \* \*

BACH: *Concerto in A major*; played by Edwin Fischer and his Chamber Orchestra. Victor set M-368, two discs, price \$4.50.

**B**ACH'S seven *Clavier concertos* were in reality *pièces d'occasion*, written to fill his own need for music to pay with the orchestra of the Telemann Society. Strictly speaking they were not new works, but rather rehashings of earlier compositions which he felt he could utilize again. Whether this is to be accounted for by a laziness which hardly seems consistent with his character, or whether he was pressed for time, it is likely in any case that he felt that his music could say something new in a different medium.

The *A major concerto* is the fourth in the group, and like several of the others, was in all probability first a violin concerto, though the original has been lost. Schweitzer calls it the most pianistic of the lot, though it retains unmistakable characteristics of its former idiom.

The *clavier* part in these concertos was not elaborately or carefully worked out, consisting mostly of no more than the old violin line and that of the figured bass. The notes which Bach set down, we imagine, served simply as a kind of musical shorthand which he used as a point of departure in his own performance.

In the present recording there is no attempt to reconstruct Bach's embellishments, which would, of course, be purely a matter of conjecture, but while the piano part may be idiomatically a bit unusual there is nothing missing which should affect our enjoyment of the music. Fischer always seems to me to play better when he has the support of an orchestra, and with his own organization he

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gives a happy and scintillating account of the work. His approach is more full-blooded and vital than it often is in his recordings of the *Well-tempered Clavichord*. Of the three movements of this concerto the joyous opening *Allegro* fares best at his hands. In the *Larghetto*, which is more serious in tone, the artist does not plumb the depths, and he is not able to raise the final *Allegro* quite to the level of the first. There may be some room for question as to the legitimacy of his practice of obtaining contrast and brilliance by means of occasional octave passages, but it should be kept in mind that octave coupling on the harpsichord was common custom, and we should not object to a similar device on the piano. No one could quarrel with it on grounds of effectiveness. And to play this music on the piano at all is in a sense to transcribe it.

The small orchestra ably seconds Herr Fischer, and the recording throughout is as thoroughly alive and happy as the performance. All in all I would recommend this set for missionary work among those who have not yet gotten over the idea that Bach is essentially a dry and theoretical composer.

—P. M.

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SAINT-SAËNS: *Piano Concerto No. 4 in C minor, Opus 44*; played by Alfred Cortot, with orchestra directed by Charles Münch. Victor set M-367, three discs, price \$6.50.

THOSE who know and admire Saint-Saëns' *Third Symphony* will find a close affinity to it in this work. Thematically the concerto is more interesting, as one writer has said, and its form is more compact. The feature of this work is decidedly its technical facility, for which its composer was justly admired. From an inspirational standpoint, the concerto carries small conviction. However, its flawless structure, its well-made orchestration, and its facile melodies deserve respect. Admiration for the recording will probably be evoked more by the brilliant and impressive performance of Alfred Cortot and an unnamed orchestra under the direction of Charles Münch than by the musical value of the work.

As a recording of a piano concerto, this one has been hailed by European critics as one of the most salient, an estimate with which we heartily concur.

—P. H. R.

## KEYBOARD

BACH-BUSONI: *Chaconne*; played by Ernst Victor Wolff, pianist, Columbia Set No. X-91, two discs, price \$3.25.

BUSONI'S rousing transcription of the *Chaconne* from Bach's unaccompanied violin *Partita in D minor* is a favorite warming-up number for concert pianists, but this seems to be its first appearance on records. It can hardly be called a definitive rendition. There is more of Busoni than of Bach in this arrangement and if it is to be played at all, that which is Busoni's should be rendered unto him. Dr. Wolff, however, seems to concentrate on the Bachian elements of the piece; he plays it almost as if it were a transcription for harpsichord. The performance is a pattern in black and white; Busoni's thundering basses, his wide range of dynamics, his highly imaginative and thoroughly pianistic treatment of Bach's lines are toned down, contracted, forced into a small frame, and the result is something which is neither Bach nor Busoni. The recording is satisfactory, but the surfaces are not too smooth.

—N. B.

\* \* \* \*

DUKAS: *Variations, Interlude and Finale* (on a theme by Rameau); played by Yvonne Lefébure. Victor set M-385, two discs, price \$3.50.

THIS work, written in 1902, has for its theme a little minuet called *Le Jardin* (*The Jest*) which can be found in the first collection of Rameau's harpsichord pieces. The piquancy of the minuet inspired Dukas to compose a work of arresting qualities, brilliant and ingenious in its craftsmanship, yet definitely appealing in its emotional and rhythmic scope. E. B. Hill, in his excellent book on French music, says: "While these variations proceed in type from those of Beethoven's last period, Dukas has employed these with a harmonic ingenuity and a musical invention which could only issue from his ripened personality. The finale, in particular, combines the gaiety of the 18th century with his own heightened perceptions, and brings these variations to a brilliant close." The composition has been termed worthy to rank with the *Prelude, Chorale and Fugue* of Franck, a statement which is true enough in itself but does not present, in our estimation, a full valuation of it, for its ingenuity and inspirational content are surely more enduring than those of the Franck work.



The reproduction is excellently accomplished, and the performance of Mlle. Lefébure is a telling one.

—P. H. R.

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BRAHMS: (a) *Capriccio in B minor, Opus 76, No. 2*, (b) *Intermezzo in C major, Op. 119, No. 3*; and (c) *Capriccio in D minor, Op. 116, No. 1*, (d) *Intermezzo in A minor, Opus 116, No. 2*; played by Wilhelm Backhaus. Victor disc 14516, price \$2.00.

HERE we have a miniature recital from a Brahmsian who has already shown us the extent of his absorption and understanding of the composer's piano music. Those who own Backhaus' two albums of Brahms' piano music (Victor sets M-202 and M-321) will unquestionably want this disc. It adds to those sets and duplicates nothing in them.

The *Capriccio in D minor* and the *Intermezzo in A minor* are particularly appealing compositions, contemplative and earnestly expressive. Three of the pieces are new to recording, the *C major Intermezzo* having been previously recorded by Myra Hess (Columbia 4083M) and by Moisseievitch (HMV E538). The recording here is clearer and tonally brighter than in the earlier records.

—P. H. R.

## VOCAL

BACH: *The Passion of Our Lord According to St. Matthew (Vol. 2)*;; performed by the Harvard Glee Club, Radcliffe Choral Society, with soloists, the Boston Symphony Orchestra with E. V. Wolff (harpsichord) and Carl Weinrich (organ), under the direction of Serge Koussevitzky. Victor set M-412, fifteen sides, price \$15.00.

THE first record of this second installment of the complete recording of the *St. Matthew Passion* includes the choral outburst, *O Man, bewail thy grievous fall*, which completes the first part of the work. This record should properly have been included in the first album.

The present album carries us through section 55 of the work, a repetition of the chorale in section three, beginning with the words *O wondrous love such punishment endureth*. The reposeful beauty of this chorale, which is excellently sung, is a well-chosen point to terminate the second album.

The merits and faults of this recording are practically the same as outlined last month. The solo singers, excepting Keith Kaulkner and Katherine Meisle, definitely lack distinc-

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tion. The burden of this section falls on Miss Meisle. Her interpretative intelligence and understanding serve her here better than her vocal gifts. In her first aria, *Grief, now is my Jesus gone*, her unsteadiness of tone is most annoying. In the great aria, *Have mercy, Lord, my God, (Erbarme dich, mein Gott)*, one of the high points of the work, she proves her ability to attain convincing emotional expression and expressive shading, although definitely handicapped by an English text. Her vocal unevenness, her lack of fluency at times, however, prevent her rendition of this aria from being a truly outstanding recording achievement. (One must return to the Maartje Offers record for this—Victor 11143). The decidedly annoying manner in which this aria is broken up in the recording does not help the singer's case either. With the wide space at the end of the second part of the recording, surely the reproduction editor could have included the *da capo* section, instead of starting the next record face with it, and then asking us to wait for fifteen seconds or more before the performance went on. The breaks in the recording are badly managed; and the silent empty grooves at the beginning of each record side retards the pace of the performance, and the recording itself is most uneven, demanding constant alteration of the tone-controls from side to side.

The tenor solos and the bass solo, *Quickly, Christ my Lord, restore me*, are wanting in distinction. The vocal production of both singers lacks the essential fluency for this music.

As in the first volume of the recording, the work of the chorus is accomplished with convincing expression and with appropriate fervor. The choral singing is tonally agreeable at all times, and well blended. Koussevitzky at the helm of the orchestra still remains the guiding spirit of the whole performance, and although it can be said that he often could attain greater fervor it must be admitted at the same time that his performance is an outstanding one.

Terry finds the opening of Part Two of the *Passion* somewhat artificial after the "deep sincerity" of the finale of Part One. The drama builds however, and after the "intrusion" of the chorale, *How false the world*, the music takes on new significance. It is a pity the tenor solo, *Endure, faint heart!*, could not have been rendered with less effort, for its beauty is not sustained as done. After the bass aria, which presents Judas flinging down the thirty pieces of silver before the priests, the action turns to *Christ*

*Before Pilate*. After the recitative and chorus depicting Barabbas released from duress, comes the chorale which ends this part of the recording installment.

—P. H. R.

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BRAHMS: *Liebeslieder Walzer*, Op. 52; sung by Florence Vickland, soprano; Evelyn MacGregor, contralto; William Hain, tenor; and Crane Calder, bass; accompanied by Grace Castagnetta and Milton Kaye, pianists. Musicraft Album No. 14, three discs, price \$5.

ON three different occasions Brahms expressed homage to the city he adopted as his home, Vienna, by writing a set of waltzes. The present set of eighteen short *Lovesong Waltzes*, for vocal quartet and two pianos, was composed in the Summer of 1868. They are unpretentious little pieces, full of a quiet grace and charm.

The performance is delightful, if less than perfect in some respects. One can imagine a more homogeneous group of voices; the two lower parts are better sung than the upper; and there are moments when the singers seem to be uncertain as to which strand of melody should predominate. These are minor defects, however, in a generally musical and well-integrated ensemble.

The leaflet contains the German texts of the songs. An English translation would have been welcome, even though most of the verses are of the "if I were a bird I'd fly to your garden" variety.

The recording is good.

—N. B.

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HARRIS: *Symphony for Voices—On Poems of Walt Whitman*; sung by the Westminster Choir (unaccompanied). Victor set M-427, two discs, price \$4.50.

THIS work has already been hailed as an achievement and criticized as an experiment. Harris writes here for voices as if he were writing for an orchestra. It is an experiment, but at the same time it is an outstanding modern choral work, not entirely unparalleled except in its fugal last movement. The form of the work has already been covered in our article on Harris, printed elsewhere in this issue. It remains therefore to speak of the performance.

The work was written for the Westminster Choir, and the performance shows signs of intensive preparation. It is a most difficult composition, and unquestionably places a strain on its performers. Just how much of



this strain would appear in performance by another choir we cannot say, but in the present case we are confronted with evidence of it in an irrefutable manner—a manner which circumvents our complete enjoyment of this recording of a score that is intensely interesting, emotionally moving upon occasion and also hauntingly beautiful. The Westminster Choir on records have not proved a satisfying organization (perhaps in actual performance they have acquitted themselves more notably); and here as in previous recordings we find the female voices downright unpleasant in tonal quality. Then again, there is the matter of off-pitch singing, which in the stunning triple fugue (by far the best sung of the three sections) proves disconcerting. —P. H. R.

\* \* \* \*

**A SECOND SONG RECITAL BY LOTTE LEHMANN: SCHUBERT: *Gretchen am Spinnrade*, op.2; *Wiegenlied*, op.98, no.2; BRAHMS: *Das Mädchen spricht*, op.107, no.3; *Mein Mädchen hat einen Rosenmund* (*Deutsche Volkslieder*); *Botschaft*, op.47, no.1; MARX: *Selige Nacht*; PFITZNER: *Gretel*, op.11, no.5; SCHUMANN: *Du bist wie eine Blume*, op.25, no.24; *Frühlingsnacht*, op.39, no.12; *Alte Laute*, op.35, no.12; WOLF: *Der Gärtner*; *Du denkst mit einem Fädchen*; *Storchenbotschaft*; FRANZ: *Für Musik*, op.10, no.1; *Gute Nacht*, op.5, no.7; JENSEN: *Lehn' deine Wang' an meine Wang'*, op.1, no.1. With piano accompaniments by Erno Balogh. Victor set M-419, six ten-inch discs, price \$9.00.**

**ACCORDING** to Victor publicity the present growing interest in recorded lieder received its impetus from Lotte Lehmann's first song recital album, released about two years ago. Now, riding the crest of her own popularity and that of this public awakening, the singer returns in another tempting program, well arranged to balance a few familiar though by no mean trite songs with a number of others which deserve to be better known than they are. Of these latter, five make their initial appearance on records, and one of the composers (Pfitzner) is represented for the first time in American catalogues.

Mme. Lehmann has never been a flawless vocalist, but such are her personal magnetism, her boundless exuberance and the natural beauty of her voice that her very faults have come to be accepted as virtues. She is above all things an honest singer: I doubt if ever in her long career she has resorted to any



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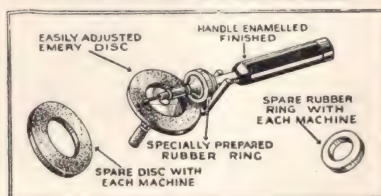
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sort of trickery. Her singing is simply what it is, and her public has been more than willing to accept it as such without any question or criticism. In this respect, I suppose, these new records are characteristic Lehmann, though on the whole her admirers are going to find them disappointing. In the first place, of course, her voice not unnaturally shows signs of its long and honorable years of service (she makes too much use of her middle voice today and not enough of her head voice), and the rather too candid recording makes the most of her technical shortcomings. Furthermore the songs which she has elected to sing are almost without exception particularly exacting ones, and she has not been completely successful in establishing their moods. Only once in the set is the old magic there in its full glory.

*Gretchen am Spinnrade* must already be at least once in every collection with any leanings toward lieder—consequently interest in any new recording focuses strongly on the interpretation. With the Gerhardt record in my cabinet, besides the memorable antique of Galski and the altogether astonishing one of Emma Eames (which, though it departs a bit from the truest lieder style, remains the most thrilling of all) I shall probably not often return to this mechanically superior one of Lehmann. The soprano's audible breathing has always been one of her most serious faults, but I have never heard it so much in evidence as here. Every phrase is punctuated by a gasp. As a result her *Gretchen* is less the simple and innocent victim than a spoiled and petulant girl who has not succeeded in having her own way. This effect is heightened by the halting spinning wheel provided by Mr. Balogh. Of the *Wiegenlied* on the reverse I can only say that it lacks true intimacy—it has been better recorded by Ria Ginster (HMV DB 1926).

Both *Das Mädchen spricht* and the folk-song arrangement *Mein Mädel hat einen Rosenmund* have been done for us by Gerhardt (Victor 7794-7795), and I still prefer her performances. Lehmann's singing of the latter is distinctly personal, words and music being altered to suit her pleasure. *Botschaft* completes the Brahms group, sung rather too deliberately to achieve the feeling of flow and inevitability which it should have. In this song Mme. Lehmann's conception and that of the pianist seem not altogether at one.

It is good to have to the Marx and Pfitzner songs, though *Selige Nacht* could do with a somewhat calmer reading. *Gretel* is a folksy

setting of a little poem by Carl Busse, telling a story of youthful love. Here the singer finds opportunity for some of her typical dramatizing.

*Du bist wie eine Blume* is one of Schumann's loveliest songs, and it is surprising that it has been so seldom recorded. Mme. Lehmann herself has done it before for Parlophone, though if memory serves her efforts were ruined by a couple of extraneous instruments in the accompaniment. I very much prefer Julia Culp's Electrola disc (EW 9) to this new one. Nor does Lehmann's *Frühlingsnacht*, with its false start, challenge that of Gerhardt (HMV DB 1544). However, in *Alte Laute*, which has never been recorded before, we have the soprano at her best. This song is one of two on the same melody in op.35 to poems by Justinus Kerner. It is a simple and melting lament for the happiness of departed days.

Of the Wolf songs *Der Gärtner* has been needed on records, and while *Du Denkst mit einem Fädchen* was included in the first Hugo Wolf Society album, this new recording is now the only one available. *Storchensbotschaft* is in the forthcoming Vol. 6, but the edition is limited, and even the superb Rehkemper Polydor disc (27186) may not be easy to get today. Therefore this record is a real contribution.

Of the two Franz songs *Gute Nacht* is the more successful, since the singer does not seem at ease in the *tessitura* of *Für Musik*. The set is completed by Jensen's lovely *Lehn' deine Wang' an meine Wang'*, which seems to have been unaccountably forgotten of late.

Mme Lehmann's public is a large one, and there are sure to be many who will welcome this recital, with all its limitations. It must be confessed, however, that it is a definite falling off from the standard of her earlier set, though even in that the singing was by no means perfectly even. It is a little sad to think of those who will listen to Lehmann for the first time by means of these new records.

Mr. Balogh, the singer's accompanist, is surely no asset to a distinguished artist. The balance between the voice and piano was not good in the older set, and neither is it too satisfactory here, though a considerable improvement has been made. A comparison with any recent European lieder recording, however, will show this set up rather badly in this respect.

Unfortunate too is the failure of the booklet to include the full texts and translations of the songs. Instead we have to be content



with a few remarks by the singer upon each of them. I wonder if the sponsors realize the value of the book of words in propagandizing lieder records.

—P. M.

\* \* \* \*

**SCHUBERT:** *Die schöne Müllerin*, Op. 25; sung by Ernst Wolff, baritone, accompanying himself at the piano. Columbia set 317, price \$10.50.

**I**N presenting a new recording of *Die schöne Müllerin* Columbia places us under obligation, since the three existing sets are expensive and difficult to obtain, and have other individual drawbacks. The Hüsch recording was issued in a special limited society edition, and that of Mme. Germaine Martinelli, besides being inappropriately sung by a woman, is done in a French translation. The list is completed by Hans Duhan, who is at best not the world's most exciting singer.

*Die schöne Müllerin* is the earlier of the two great cycles which Schubert composed to poems of the then popular Wilhelm Müller. Into its simple and rustic tale he poured music full of young life and hope, which, for all its unhappy ending, is in sharp contrast to the almost unrelieved tragic gloom and disillusionment of *Die Winterreise*. Indeed so great is the contrast that it is hard to believe that only four years elapsed between the two cycles.

Listening to *Die schöne Müllerin* as a whole we realize that, delightful as the songs are taken individually (and there are several which are a part of every singer's repertoire) each is in reality so integral a part of the story that it is actually misrepresentation to perform them separately. The sequence is stronger in this cycle than in *Die Winterreise*, or, I am tempted to say, in any other of our really great song cycles. The miller, on finishing his apprenticeship, leaves the master's house and follows the brook down into the valley. He comes at last to a mill which attracts him, and so he applies for work. He falls in love with the miller's daughter, and though she at first seems to return his affection, he is soon cast aside in favor of a hunter. The young miller ends his sorrows by drowning in his beloved brook.

Müller's set of poems so fascinated Schubert when he first found them that he ran immediately home, forgetting an appointment, and began to set them to music. These verses were enjoying a wide popularity at the time, for the idea of adapting the tone of folk poetry into cultivated art was then a new thing. The *Müllerlieder* was originally written, it seems, for a kind of charade which

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Müller and his circle devised for an evening's entertainment. The note of sincerity and genuine beauty which found their way into Müller's verses is to be accounted for by the fact that Müller was deeply in love with the accomplished Luise Henschel, who played the part of the *Müllerin*. This passion, it seems, was never declared, nor suspected by the lady, though it had an enormous effect upon the poet. As his verses were published they had a rather facetious prologue and epilogue, which, of course, Schubert did not use. He also omitted three of the poems from Müller's sequence.

It would be too much to say that Ernst Wolff has presented the ultimate interpretation of these irresistible songs, but he has caught their spirit far more successfully than Gerhard Hüsch in the society recording. Hüsch has a voice and style naturally suited to *Die Winterreise*, but in *Die schöne Müllerin* he is heavy and dull. Wolff, on the other hand has the proper *Stimmung* throughout, though vocally he is a bit uneven. It is no mean feat to sing these particular songs to one's own accompaniment, and this singer does so with truly amazing success. His faults are obvious and consistent, and no doubt due to the strain of his dual capacity. Any singer knows that it is difficult to sing in a sitting position—it is almost bound to interfere with the breathing apparatus. Wolff's habit of missing an occasional high note by a mere shade of pitch is probably a result of this. It is almost invariably in the more sustained songs that this happens: the faster ones are excellent. His *Ungeduld*, *Das Wandern*, *Der Jäger* and *Mein!* are splendid.

In spite of these weaknesses, then, this set is to my mind preferable to its more expensive rivals, and it is an accomplishment of which Mr. Wolff may well be proud. So may Columbia's engineers, for the recording is excellent.

—P. M.

\* \* \* \* \*

SCHUBERT: *Der Tod und das Mädchen*, op.7, no.3; *Die Forelle*, op.32; sung by Marian Anderson, contralto, with piano accompaniment by Kosti Vehanen. Victor ten-inch disc, No. 1862, price \$1.50.

HERE is the record which not only the admirers of Marian Anderson have been waiting for, but also those of a certain composer named Franz Schubert. As for the rest of the world, if that leaves anyone out, I am sure they have but to listen to it to be converted to both composer and singer.

Only those who have heard Miss Anderson's interpretation of the endlessly amazing

*Tod und das Mädchen* can have any idea of the thrill carried on this disc. The singer's vocal quality as she intones the icily suave words of *Death* is not to be imagined—it must be experienced. Of course the song has had a great many previous sessions in the recording studios, but very few of the singers who have attempted it have succeeded in making both the voice of the young girl and that of her grim pursuer credible. Miss Anderson is the long-awaited exception. Here is a unique performance, worthy of a great song, and of a great singer who is also a big personality.

On the reverse we have the best electrical version I have heard of the less portentous song about the trout who was caught by not quite fair means—*Die Forelle*. Here the singer has to reckon with the memory of the 1912 disc of Schumann-Heink, and she nearly if not quite equals that performance. There was a wonderful note of pathos in the older lady's treatment of the word *Betrogne* which I miss here, though Anderson does get something of the same lilt into the song, and her passage work is exceptionally clean.

There are a few minute flaws in the singing of these songs, but such is the magnificence of the whole that it seems almost a sacrilege to mention them. Perhaps her intonation is not quite perfect, and perhaps she slights the time value of an occasional note, but these things hardly matter. Perhaps, too, Mr. Vehanen, who is in his best form, does not quite achieve perfection in the upward chromatic runs in *Die Forelle*, but he gives fine support and collaboration, and he has been recorded in excellent balance with the singer. Needless to say, Miss Anderson's voice reproduces superlatively well.

—P. M.

\* \* \* \* \*

MOUSSORGSKY: Songs - *Sunless Cycle* (Six songs); *Pride*; *Ballade*; and *King Saul*; sung by Moshe Rudinow with Ester Elkind at the piano. Gamut set No. 4, four 10-inch discs, price \$4.50.

MOUSSORGSKY'S songs are so definitely the works of a genius that one wonders why they are not sung more often. Such a cycle, for example, as the *Sunless*, a group of six sensitive and introspective songs, surely deserves wider exploitation by noted singers. Many people when they think of Moussorgsky as a song writer undoubtedly recall his *Song of the Flea*, an ingenious theatrical piece but hardly a true representation of his abilities as a composer of songs. Moussorgsky's song literature presents many interest-



ing and unusual compositions, by turn dramatic, emotionally intense, subtle, impressionistic — expressive in fact of many moods. The theatre of life is unfolded to us in his songs, which accounts for the fact that singers like Chaliapin and Rosing find them excellent vehicles for their artistry. There is more than theatricality in Moussorgsky's songs, however, and for this reason they require a fine voice as well as great interpretative ability to put them across satisfactorily.

Rosing's album of fourteen Moussorgsky songs, issued by Parlophone in England and recently repressed by Decca in this country, is no more satisfactory in the final analysis than is this new one by Rudinow. Rosing, a noted singer-actor, makes up for his lack of voice by his acting. His interpretations are undeniably effective, but they all emphasize the theatrical. Rudinow, the possessor of a big baritone voice, sings in a straightforward, workmanlike manner. One admires his musicianship and breadth of style, but wishes he had some of the more vivid characteristics of the other man, and less vocal vibrato. The one singer exaggerates while the other is too restrained. Rudinow, new to records, is a well known cantor who sings at the Temple Emanu-El in New York City.

The recording here has been excellently accomplished. The piano accompaniments, sympathetically played, are well balanced. The accompanying booklet contains a transliteration of the Russian texts and English translations which retain the original meters.

—P. H. R.

\* \* \*

**MOUSSORGSKY:** *Boris Godounow, I Have Attained the Highest Power* (Monolog from Act 2), and *Ah, I Am Suffocating* (Clock Scene, Act 2); sung by Feodor Chaliapin. Victor disc 14517, price \$2.00

**CHALIAPIN** made this record in England about four years ago, where, when it was released, it was rightly praised as one of the best that the singer has given us. Why it was never brought out here before we unearthed it, so to speak, we shall never know. It is one of the most thrilling operatic records ever made, and a notable artistic achievement.

The two scenes are reversed on the label, for the *Monolog* precedes the *Clock Scene* in the opera. In the *Monolog*, Boris tells us that despite the fact that he has "attained the highest power", he is unable to find peace of mind. Having caused the murder of Dimitri, the son of the Czar Feodor, and having subsequently usurped the throne, Boris is troubled not only by his own conscience but

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by the news that the people are in revolt, believing Dimitri lives. In the famous *Clock Scene*, he is a prey to remorse; the ticking of the clock suddenly assumes an ominous tone to his overwrought nerves, and he imagines he sees the figure of the dead boy. Terror-stricken, he hurls a stool at the apparition then sinks back exhausted, praying for mercy.

Chaliapin portrays these two scenes superbly. Those who have heard and seen him as Boris on the stage will find this record a thrilling momento. The reproduction here is entirely satisfactory, despite its age.

—P. H. R.

\* \* \* \*

RAVEL: *Trois chansons Nicolette; Ronde; Trois beaux oiseaux du paradis*; sung by Les Chanteurs de Lyon, direction of Leon Vietti. Columbia disc, No. 9136-M, price \$1.50.

NOW that Maurice Ravel is no more and radio programs are being given in his memory it is good to be able to escape the eternal *Bolero* and make the acquaintance of such out-of-the-way compositions as these three *Chansons*. Ravel is said to have wanted to try his hand at writing for unaccompanied chorus, and these three songs, published in 1916, are the result of his desire. It speaks volumes for the mastery of this artist that he was able to tackle an unaccustomed medium and produce music which is at once so distinguished and so characteristic.

Ravel himself wrote the words for the *Chansons*. The texts are rather hard to follow as one listens to the recording, though this is rather to be blamed on the composer than on the excellent chorus.

*Nicolette* is a song about a young girl who went out into the field to pick flowers. She fled from a wolf and refused a young page, but accepted the advances of an old man. The idea, it will be noted, is similar to that of Moussorgsky's *Goat*. *Trois beaux oiseaux du paradis* (the order of the cycle is changed in the recording to bring the two short songs on one side) is built on the favorite theme of birds carrying messages between distant lovers. The little refrain *Mon amy-z'il est à la guerre* gives to the text a decided folksong flavor, which is carried out in the melody and modern-archaic harmonies. This *chanson* is a dialogue between several solo voices against a humming choral background. The *Ronde* is a catalogue of reasons for not going into the woods, and here Ravel shows his literary as well as his musical imagination.

The work of the chorus from Lyons is a

model of precision and spirit, and the voices of the soloists in *Trois beaux oiseaux* is excellent. The recording is rich and full.

—P. M.

\* \* \* \*

STRAUSS: *Ach, Lieb', ich muss nun scheiden; Freundliche Vision*; sung by Helge Roswaenge, tenor, with piano by Bruno Seidler-Winkler. Ten-inch Victor disc, No. 1841, price \$1.50.

IN spite of his stupendous technique, Richard Strauss is capable of writing music of the most disarming and deceptive simplicity. *Ach, Lieb', ich muss nun scheiden*, Opus 21, No. 3, recorded here for the first time, is a case in point. The text, by Felix Dahn, is an expression of the sorrow of lovers' parting, and Strauss has given it a setting completely unpretentious and direct. Fortunately it is presented in a straight and unmannered performance by Helge Roswaenge, who appreciates its poignant sincerity. This tenor's voice is an exceptional one, and it still has the bloom of youth on it.

*Freundliche Vision*, Op. 48, No. 1, is another quiet and expressive *lied*, but one of enormous difficulty for the performers. Its long sustained line and Strauss' impossible phrasing indications make it a test for any singer, and the piano part requires a good deal more than the ability to play the notes. Otto Julius Bierbaum's poem is a day dream of quiet happiness, a lover imagining himself crossing some sunny field with his love. Recorded a number of times before, the song fared most successfully at the hands of Elisabeth Schumann, though her disc is now rather obviously near the ten-year mark. This new interpretation simply serves to lead us back to the old favorite. Roswaenge is less at ease than in the other song: his singing is rather matter-of-fact and lacking in line. Nor is he able to cover his embarrassment at the phrasing difficulties.

Bruno Seidler-Winkler plays acceptable if hardly distinguished piano accompaniments.

—P. M.

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TOSTI: *Ideale*; and DI CAPUA: *O sole mio*; sung by Jussi Björling. Victor disc No. 4379, 10-inch, price \$1.00.

**B**JÖRLING sings two old favorites with fine tonal quality, but not in a manner that convinces us that he knows what all the "shooting's about." Italians will gasp at some of his pronunciation of the Neapolitan dialect, and will likewise be unconvinced that he truly wants the return of his "ideal one."



The Tosti song is dated. Its chief value today remains as a teaching piece. Just because Caruso and other great singers sang it, and it was popular at the turn of the century, does not say that it should be heard today. Its sentiment is as outmoded as long stockings and stays with a bathing suit. They both belong to a forgotten era, or should we say a bygone but not forgotten one?

As for di Capua's *O sole mio*, this is a different case. It has become practically an Italian folksong, for its spirit is not only close to but definitely of the people. Björling does not bring to it the requisite nostalgia or the Latin fervor, but he does a good vocal job. Recording here is good.

—P. G.

## VIOLIN

BACH: *Concerto in D minor*; played by Joseph Szigeti and Carl Flesch with Orchestra, direction Walter Goehr. Columbia set X-90, two discs, price \$3.25.

THE *D minor Concerto* of Bach remains one of his most attractive works for the violin, not alone for the pure beauty of its slow movement but also because its outer movements are made doubly interesting by the dual lines of the solo instruments. In the other violin concertos, the discourse of the solo violin is set up against the basses, which never really take the lead, hence the focus is mainly on the one instrument. But here the two violins are set up against each other, and they assert their individuality and independence with almost equal forcefulness and at the same time discourse with equal fervor. The orchestra, Terry says, "comes to occupy a very subordinate and insignificant position, mainly contenting itself with supplying the harmonies and indicating the rhythmic pulse."

Not so long ago we had the Menuhin-Enesco performance of this work (Victor discs 7732-33), which was praised as the best version on records. The styles of Menuhin and Enesco mated better than do those of Szigeti and Flesch, but the latter players give a more exciting performance, setting forth the virtuoso qualities of the outer movements in a more striking and vivifying manner. The musical approach of each of the present players is quite different. Szigeti's, for example, is a wholly intellectual one; his tonal texture is never sensuous although it cannot be termed wholly lacking in expressiveness. Szigeti maintains a transparent purity in his exposition of Bach that is particularly gratifying. Carl Flesch, on the other hand, owns a warmer and less vibrant tonal

quality; his musical approach is more emotional than Szigeti's. Stylistically both men maintain a high level, for both are artists of the front rank. This difference in style between the two artists, far from detracting from the merits of their performance, has its advantages, since it allows for greater contrast and dramatic interest in the dialogue.

Walter Goehr's direction of the orchestra, which boasts a harpsichord realizing the continuo, is almost too precise. He does not attain the resiliency, for example, that Monteux achieved in his accompaniment for Menuhin and Enesco. Monteux's ensemble did not include the harpsichord, however, and since this instrument is prominently featured in this set, the marked precision here may be accredited to its inclusion.

Reproduction is excellent, and the surfaces of these records are consistently good.

—P. H. R.

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KREISLER: *Caprice Viennois*, and *Tambourin Chinois*; played by Fritz Kreisler with Franz Rupp at the piano. Victor disc No. 14690, price \$2.00.

KREISLER'S admirers will find these recordings of two of his most popular violin morceaux excellently accomplished. He is in fine form, lavish with tonal quality that is worthy of more notable fare, but this we concede is as it should be since he is here both composer and performer.

—P. G.

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## AFRICAN MUSIC

THE BELGIAN CONGO RECORDS. *Primitive African Music* (from sound film taken in the Congo by the Denis-Roosevelt Expedition). Six 10-inch discs, album and illustrated booklet, \$10.00.

SCIENTIFIC expeditions to primitive tribes are rarely equipped for collecting native music with anything better than spring wound cylinder recording machines. We are fortunate that the Denis-Roosevelt expedition to the Belgian Congo, 1935-36, took dances, songs and rituals from various tribes on sound film from which these discs have been splendidly re-recorded. Their directness and lack of artificiality make us realize vividly that music is a social phenomenon. The booklet accompanying this set gives some interesting data on how music functions in the mountains and in the equatorial forests of the Congo territories.

For most of us music is an art to be enjoyed by passive listening. We are bystanders, not participants. We do not use music as physical expression. In the structure and strong rhythm of alternating solo and group in the choral songs of the Manbetu and Babira tribes, we catch perhaps a glimpse of why the spirituals were so acceptable to the Negro in America.

The many social and ceremonial dances make music a lively and constantly integral part of primitive life, far from the stiffness of the dances of our rare formal occasions. There is great variety in the dance music—from the vigor of the mountain tribe of the Bahutu to the restraint of the Mambuti Pigmies. To our civilized attitude which glorifies the individual virtuoso with his vast technical feats, it comes as a shock to learn that the flute music to which these Pigmies dance is made on instruments "capable of only one tone so that, in order to form a tune, it is necessary for each of the players to blow into his flute at his proper turn."

In fascinating contrast, there is the delightful record of the music of the xylophone at Lubero. Two players sit at the hardwood native instrument opposite each other and with wooden clubs improvise music simultaneously. "Swing" enthusiasts should listen to this for its inventiveness. The pleasure one gets in listening to improvisation of this sort derives from a sense of relaxation and freedom that is communicated by the players, a freedom which moves within the boundaries of a personal style in a traditional culture. We should recognize that in improvisation one does not

create out of thin air; one simply recombines known thematic material.

In our own musical history, royalty and the nobility participated in music and in the days when music had a clearer relation to the culture of the period than exists today. I am glad to announce that the gigantic king of the Watusi adds genuine greatness to this royal tradition. Playing with his provincial chiefs on the sacred drums which accompany him wherever he goes, the results are amazing. Three record sides develop at length the groups of complicated rhythmic patterns in distinct blocks. Modern composers interested in percussion might benefit by listening particularly to this group. The complete set of records is strongly recommended for those who want exciting as well as culturally important and delightful music.

—Herbert Halpert.

## RECITATION

GOETHE: *Der Erlkönig*; ANDERSEN: *Die Prinzessin auf der Erbse*; recited by Alexander Moissi. Columbia 10-inch disc, No. 4195-M, price \$1.00.

ON one of his American tours the Italian-born German actor Alexander Moissi did some recording for Columbia, but for some reason the fruits of his labors were not at that time released to the public. Recently some of the masters have turned up, and we are now given the belated pleasure of hearing his marvelously varied voice. Moissi died in 1935, but he was a great actor and not likely to be forgotten, so that these reminders are more than welcome.

On one side of the disc we may hear a gripping delivery of Goethe's *Erlkönig*, which is so familiar in Schubert's and Loewe's settings that we are apt to forget that it was first a great piece of poetry. There is no use trying to describe the eeriness of Moissi's reading—I will only say that it makes the most dramatic singing of the Schubert song seem like a bedtime story. For what it adds to the imaginative horizon, this record should be owned by every student of either musical setting. Incidentally it demonstrates, if that is necessary, how much nearer to the poem is the setting of Loewe than that of Schubert.

*Die Prinzessin auf der Erbse* is the Andersen fairy tale of the princess and the pea, told with such delightful inflection that anyone with the barest smattering of German is bound to enjoy it. Teachers of the language could hardly do better than add this disc to the tools of their profession.

—P. M.

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# In the Popular Vein

By HORACE VAN NORMAN

## STANDARD POPULAR

AAAA—*Love Is Here to Stay*, and *I Was Doing All Right*. Red Norvo and his Orchestra. Brunswick 8068.

These two tunes are from the *Goldwyn Follies* and represent the very last work from the pen of George Gershwin before his tragic death. *Love Walked In*, his other tune to appear in the film, has not been even reasonably well recorded to date, but appears on the face of it a better number than either of these. However, both of them have the indubitable Gershwin touch, particularly *Love Is Here to Stay*, and Norvo gives it an elegant, if hot, treatment. There is an adhesive quality to the tune which speaks well for its chances of a more or less permanent popularity, but Norvo's recording of it here is 90 percent Norvo and 10 percent Gershwin, and it is being recommended as such. If you want a thoroughly accurate notion of what these tunes really sound like, in other words, this just won't fill the bill, but if you like A-1 Norvoniana, as we do, with the usual superb vocals of Madame Norvo (Mildred Bailey to you) this is your dish, without a doubt.

\* \* \* \*

AAAA—*Just Let Me Look At You*, and *You Couldn't Be Cuter*. Tommy Dorsey and his Orchestra. Victor 25766.

New Jerome Kern melodies, the former is one of those airy tunes that Kern is always able to pull out of his sleeve, and distinguished here by a grand vocal at the hands of Jack Leonard, while the latter is in livelier tempo, with Dorsey giving it a performance with plenty of life and bounce.

\* \* \* \*

AAA—*Sunday In the Park*, and *Doing the Reactionary*. Hudson - de Lange Orchestra. Brunswick 8077.

Here are a couple of the better numbers from the fervently applauded *Pins and Needles* score. A rather painstaking perusal of the entire score does not lead to the belief that Porter, Berlin or Rodgers and Hart have any reason to fear that Mr. Harold Rome, the author, is in imminent danger of toppling them from their lofty eminence at

the top of the songwriting profession. Aside from the consistently left-ist character of the lyrics, they are in few respects superior or different from the run-of-the-mill Tin Pan Alley product. So fundamentally conventional are they that we predict *Sunday In the Park*, for one, will have a very bourgeois success, the kind of success that invariably awaits a thoroughly commonplace idea incorporated into a tune which reminds you of six or a dozen other tunes. We hope we're not sounding cynical but a study of the week-to-week No. 1 numbers on the Hit Parade leads inevitably to the conclusion that the public loathes originality or distinction, even in its popular music, and as soon as Mr. Rome sheds his present associates he will, I'm certain, be able to turn out his share of sure-fire hits with the worst of them. The Hudson-de Lange boys do a creditable job on both the super-conventional *Sunday In the Park*, and the rather long-underwearish *Doing the Reactionary*.

\* \* \* \*

AAA—*The Donkey Serenade*, and *Giannina Mia*. Allan Jones. Victor 4380.

That exceedingly romantic figure, Allan Jones, sings the outstanding numbers from Friml's *The Firefly*. *The Donkey Serenade* turns out to be a rather original setting of that piano piece which was known originally as *Chanson*, some quarter-century or more ago, and which, in a later incarnation, became the popular song *Chansonette*. Now, as *The Donkey Serenade*, it bids fair to be more widely known than ever before. Jones' performance of it, along with the perennially popular *Giannina Mia*, is generally pleasing, although the recording of the former, which sounds as though it might be off the sound track of the film, accentuates the rather metallic quality in his voice.

## HOT JAZZ

OAAAA—*The New Black and Tan Fantasy*, and *Stepping Into Swing Society*. Duke Ellington and his Orchestra. Brunswick 8063.

Here, Glory be, is a return of the greater Ellington, which means that this is not only



the best record released this month but one of the best records in a year. Every once in so often, the Duke delights in confounding his critics by turning out a record of such magnificent qualities that none but an idiot could possibly deny the man's greatness. *The New Black and Tan Fantasy* is such a record. Utilizing the harmonic skeleton of his pioneer work bearing the same name, the Duke has constructed a work of truly superb character and all with the simplest of means. Swing bands may come and go but as long as the Duke is capable of giving us records like this he will remain unapproachable.

\* \* \* \*

AAAA—*Oh Promise Me, and Shine On Harvest Moon.* Tommy Dorsey and his Orchestra. Victor 25780.

We always said that we should live to see the day when the boys would be swinging sacred music. In *Oh Promise Me*, they've come closer to it than I honestly imagined they ever would. And the results, while they may prove shocking to Reginald de Koven's heirs and assigns, are not likely to be offensive to many others. After all, the boys figure that one tune is very much like another, divorced from its text and judged purely as music, and its just happens that *Oh Promise Me* lends itself to the swing better than most. Dorsey's usual solid sending is ever evident here and even Bud Freeman's tenor work is less objectionable than usual.

\* \* \* \*

AAA—*Humoresque, and Doin' the Jive.* Glenn Miller and his Orchestra. Brunswick 8062.

Of all swing versions of classics and near classics that we have heard in many months, Miller's treatment of *Humoresque* is in many ways the best. Remembering the many discs in which heavy handed arrangers have slandered their betters by mauling, mutilating and otherwise manhandling their brain children, it is a distinct pleasure to hear as thoroughly witty and musically ingenious an arrangement as the woefully underrated Miller has turned out here. We don't know whether Miller still depends on his trombone playing for the bulk of his income or not (band appearing here under his name is purely a recording unit, of course) but if this gives the measure of the sort of work Miller is doing these days, then the business is regrettably depriving itself of the services of a superb arranger in order to gain a merely good trombonist. Too bad.

## Other Current Popular Releases

(The following are rated from quality of performance regardless of record quality)

AAA—*The One I Love, and Così Cosa.* Allan Jones. Victor 4381.

AAA—*Smoke From a Chimney, and My First Impression of You.* Jimmy Dorsey and his Orchestra. Decca 1652.

AAA—*Always and Always, and More Than Ever.* Bob Crosby and his Orchestra. Decca 1657.

○ AAA—*Echoes of Harlem, and Have a Heart.* Cootie Williams and his Rug Cutters. Vocalion 3960.

AAA—*Whistle While You Work, and A Little White Lighthouse.* Bert Block and his Bell Music. Vocalion 3958.

AAA—*I Fall In Love Every Day, and How'dja Like to Love Me?* Larry Clinton and his Orchestra. Victor 25775.

○ AA—*Let That Be a Lesson to You, and Struttin With Some Babecue.* Louis Armstrong and his Orchestra. Decca 1661.

AA—*One Big Union for Two, and Sunday In the Park.* Nita Carol and Alan Holt. Bluebird 7417.

AA—*Hometown, and Moonlight on the Sunset Trail.* Russ Morgan and his Orchestra. Brunswick 8066.

○ AA—*It's Wonderful, and I Was Doing All Right.* Ella Fitzgerald and her Savoy Eight. Decca 1669.

○ AA—*Texas Chatter, and Song of the Wanderer.* Barry James and his Orchestra. Decca 8067.

AA—*Runnin' Wild, and Chicken Reel.* Joe Daniels and his Hot Shots. Decca 1677.

AA—*Always and Always, and I Simply Adore You.* George Hall and his Orchestra. Vocalion 3943.

○ AA—*My Day, and Silvery Moon and Golden Sands.* Johnny Hodges and Orchestra. Vocalion 3948.

○ AA—*The Sun Will Shine Tonight, and You're My Ideal.* Lionel Hampton and his Orchestra. Victor 25771.

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(Continued from Page 442)

PURCELL—*Music of, English Music Society*—Volume I. Columbia set No. 315. In 16 parts, three 10-inch discs and five 12-inch discs, price \$14.50.

AS these records did not reach us until the 26th of February we were not able to include them in our reviews this month. They will be reviewed in the April issue by Prof. Martin Bernstein of New York University, an authority on the music of Purcell.

—The Editor



# Our Radio Dial

(Eastern Standard Time)

## NBC HIGHLIGHTS FOR MARCH (Red Network)

### Sundays—

10:30 A.M.—The Madrigal Singers with Yella Pessl  
10:00 P.M.—Rising Musical Star Program

### Mondays—

6:00 P.M.—Creagh Matthews, tenor  
6:35 P.M.—Joan Edwards, contralto  
8:30 P.M.—Voice of Firestone

### Tuesdays—

2:00 P.M.—Fun in Music  
2:30 P.M.—Gen. Fed. of Women's Clubs' Program  
7:15 P.M.—Vocal Varieties

### Wednesdays—

6:45 P.M.—Jean Sablon, songs.

### Thursdays—

2:00 P.M.—NBC Music Guild  
5:15 P.M.—Benno Rabinoff, violinist

### Fridays—

2:00 P.M.—NBC-Music Appreciation Hour  
8:00 P.M.—Cities Service Concert  
9:00 P.M.—Waltz Time

### Saturdays—

7:45 P.M.—Jean Sablon, songs  
10:00 P.M.—NBC-Symphony Orchestra

## (Blue Network)

### Sundays—

12:30 P.M.—Radio City Music Hall  
2:00 P.M.—RCA Magic Key  
5:00 P.M.—Metro. Opera Auditions

### Mondays—

3:00 P.M.—Rochester Civic Orchestra  
6:05 P.M.—U. S. Army Band  
9:00 P.M.—Philadelphia Orchestra

### Tuesdays—

2:30 P.M.—Music Guild  
3:00 P.M.—U. S. Marine Band  
7:45 P.M.—Vivian Della Chiesa, soprano

### Wednesdays—

3:45 P.M.—Metropolitan Opera Guild  
7:30 P.M.—Mario Cozzi, baritone  
9:00 P.M.—Cleveland Orchestra  
10:00 P.M.—Choir Symphonette  
10:30 P.M.—NBC-Minstrel Show

### Thursdays—

3:15 P.M.—Eastman School of Music  
8:45 P.M.—Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra

### Fridays—

2:00 P.M.—NBC-Music Appreciation Hour

### Saturdays—

2:00 P.M.—Metropolitan Opera Broadcast  
9:00 P.M.—National Barn Dance  
10:00 P.M.—NBC-Symphony Orchestra

## COLUMBIA HIGHLIGHTS FOR MARCH

### Sundays—

9:00 A.M.—Wings Over Jordan (Spirituals)  
12:30 P.M.—Salt Lake City Tabernacle  
3:00 P.M.—N. Y. Philharmonic Symphony Orch.  
7:00 P.M.—Jeanette MacDonald  
9:00 P.M.—Ford Sunday Hour

### Mondays—

4:00 P.M.—Columbia Concert Hall

### Tuesdays—

3:30 P.M.—Hollace Shaw, soprano  
9:30 P.M.—Camel Hour — Benny Goodman

### Wednesdays—

3:45 P.M.—Curtis Institute of Music  
9:00 P.M.—Kostelanetz Orch. with Tibbett

### Thursdays—

3:30 P.M.—U. S. Army Band  
10:00 P.M.—Essays in Music

### Fridays—

3:00 P.M.—U. S. Marine Band  
6:00 P.M.—CBS Children's Concert  
7:30 P.M.—Hollis Shaw, soprano  
8:30 P.M.—Paul Whiteman  
10:00 P.M.—The Song Shop

### Saturdays—

11:00 A.M.—Cincinnati Cons. of Music  
7:00 P.M.—Swing Session

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